



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

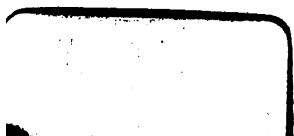
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NEDL TRANSFER

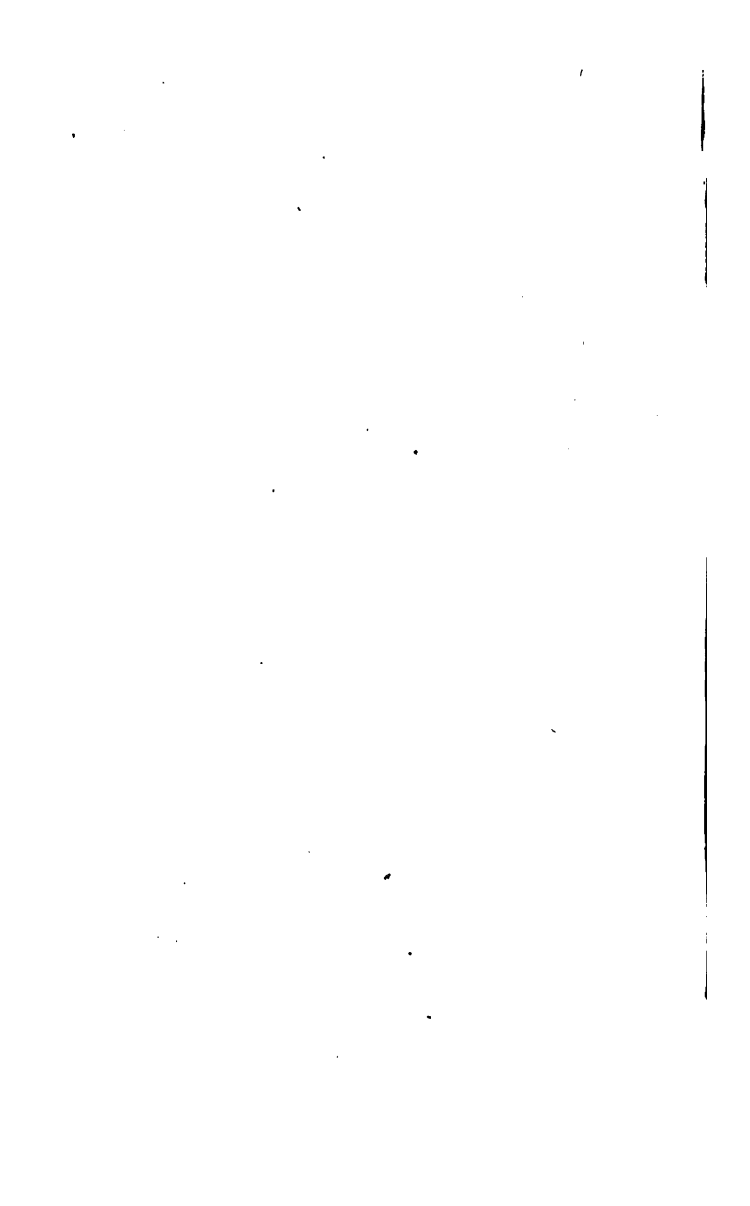


HN 2U5X 0

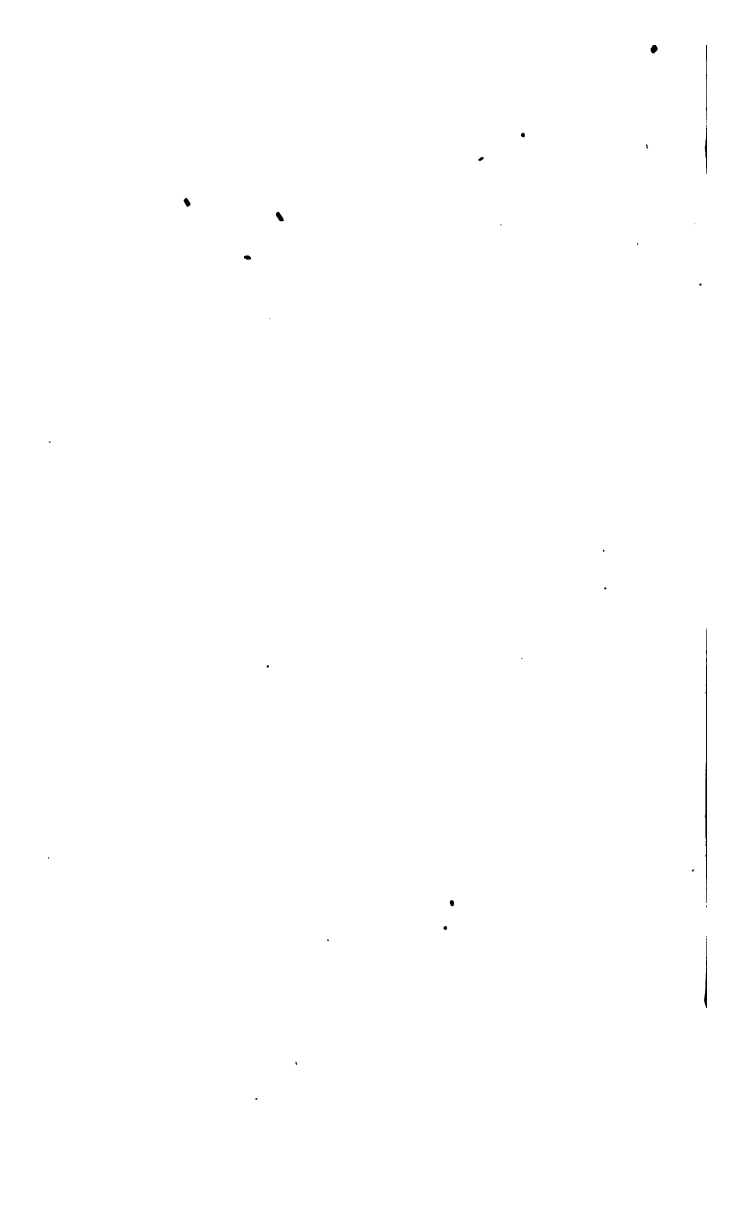
KP 685











THE
SPIRIT'S SWORD;
OR THE
TRUTH DEFENDED
FROM
ERRORS AND POPULAR DELUSIONS.

"Thy word is truth."

By WILLIAM WARREN,
AUTHOR OF "HOUSEHOLD CONSECRATION," ETC.

BOSTON:
S. K. WHIPPLE & COMPANY,
200 WASHINGTON STREET.
1853.

KP 685



*Society for Preservation
of New England Antiquities*

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852,
By S. K. WHIPPLE & CO.,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

G. C. RAND, PRINTER, CORNHILL.

DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. LINCOLN RIPLEY,
of Waterford, Maine.

MY DEAR SIR:—Your name and words are fondly associated with my earliest religious recollections. You stood among the honored Fathers of my native town. With them you entered the unbroken wilderness, and took part with them in the hardships and perils of a new settlement. You brought with you, Sir, the HOLY BIBLE, and built with the Fathers, a tabernacle to the Lord, and the wilderness became a fruitful field.

You stood through the strength of your years upon Zion's tower in that place; and we remember you as an affectionate and faithful watchman. And now, in the fifth score of your years,* the children's children rise to call you blessed, not only for their *Fathers'* sake, but for their own.

Permit me, honored and reverend Sir, to *dedicate* this volume, devoted to the defence of a Book which you have so long studied and revered, to your name.

I owe it to you, not because your hand baptised me in

* Ninety-two.

my infancy, nor because your lips kept knowledge, and we sought the law at your mouth ; but principally because, long after you had ceased to be our Shepherd, your best thoughts and affections were given to us, and to Zion. And I can in no other way compensate you for your interest in myself and my labors, and the excellent counsel I have so often loved to receive from your lips.

Yours, with the strongest sentiments

Of respect and esteem,

WILLIAM WARREN.

Uttox, Nev. 18, 1852.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE Moral Sphere, as well as the natural, has its *greater* and its *lesser* lights. Among the former are the Scriptures, the Saviour, and the Spirit; among the latter, are reason, and conscience, and learning.

In the natural world, the greater light prevails. It rules the day and the earth. It is the source of vegetation and beauty, of life and harmony. Its presence comparatively extinguishes, or veils in dimness, all the lesser lights. These shine in their splendor only when the *glory* of the earth is absent. Opaque bodies intervening, or during the polar declensions, vegetation dwindles, life languishes, and all is stunted and colorless.

In the moral sphere it is otherwise. The lesser lights usurp the sphere of the greater, and often appear to prevail in the world; but the effects are analogous to those that follow the absence of the sun in the natural world. The splendor of that which is earthly casts a veil over that which is heavenly, and gloom and paleness follow.

Pride prefers the ray of reason, the lights of philosophy and learning, to those that come directly from Heaven. It is more gratifying to task the intellect and indulge the spirit of speculation, than it is to fall back upon a simple faith, and gain spiritual knowledge and elevation through the exercise of the moral affections. But wherever the feeble lights in the moral world are allowed to prevail over the greater, and the selfish passions take the orbits

of the higher affections, absolute darkness and countless errors follow. Nor can these lesser lights of the mind be greatly quickened, without the presence of the greater. But when these moral luminaries shine in their proper glory, then the lesser lights, all unlike what takes place in the natural sphere, are in a moment brightened. But it is in vain that we stimulate reason and conscience, so long as the greater lights of the world are eclipsed or obscured. Their radiance will continue to grow more and more dim and doubtful, till the moral darkness and ruin are complete.

But it is easier to account for the moral condition of man, than to correct it. It is easier to contemplate that condition, than to encounter and overcome the obstacles to its improvement. It is impossible for us to improve upon the Divine plan, or to substitute in the grand arrangements of the moral system, inferior lights, for the great and fixed truths of God. We cannot expel the darkness of a room by polishing its bright surfaces and points, nor by any process of artificial exhaustion. We let in the light upon it, and the darkness is gone. God does not expel the darkness from the poles nor from the night by direct attacks upon it, nor by any methods of actual exclusion; but he lets the sun, the great eye of nature, look down upon it, and it is fled. So in the moral sphere. Darkness, both natural and moral, is a negative state; it is the absence of light, and it needs but a ray of light to scatter it.

Unbelief and ignorance are moral states; not wholly negative, however, as they are the occasion of complicated errors and evils in the world. They are negative in *this*, certainly—that they are the absence of sound knowledge and a pure faith. And they can be removed only by those greater lights, which God hath set in the heavens. These shine for man—universal man. They are safe, essential, and sufficient for the entire world. Though fixed in their own great centres, and unchanging, still they are perfectly fitted to the circumstances, changes, and necessities of man. They pour upon the

earth a radiance, full, fresh, and life-giving, such as reason and learning only can reflect or transmit.

Every age has its peculiar tendencies. Moral achievement is usually met by the counter currents of deterioration and depravity. The revolutions of the great wheel of progress carry some portions up by bringing others down. But the elevations, in true progress, greatly exceed the depressions. There is more in the great wheel that rises, than there is that falls. The successive ages and eras usually compare favorably with those that are past.

The Bible has met with determined opposition at every advancing era of time. Prejudice naturally clings to established customs, and interpretations of Scripture; and philosophy is prone to be proud and independent in its bearings. Prejudice is loath to go to the schools of science and learning to gain helps in the economy and refinements of life, or in obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; and learning is loath to assume the attitude of humility and trust, that makes it a safe guide in matters of religion.

It is not strange, therefore, that each developement in the material and intellectual world has seemed to come in conflict with some cherished view of Scripture. But it is easy to mistake an interpretation of Scripture for a *truth* of Scripture. A correct *knowledge* of the great facts of Scripture must be progressive, while the truth itself, whether as yet ascertained or still undiscovered, is complete. The methods of interpretation will never become perfect till science and learning are perfect. The truth is often clad in threadbare terms, and in frail symbols, sometimes in a mysterious garb; and it is addressed to minds, often, that are untaught in science and rude in conception. Yet the truth itself is fixed for ever, as the sun in the heavens. Superstition may cast her scroll of clouds, and mantle of mist, around its form, and obscure its glory. False systems and false science may eclipse that glory for a while. Other revelations, with kindred forms of error, idolatry, and corruption, may

hide half the earth in ages of midnight, yet we hope to be able to show that this light is the same unchanging glory in all ages.

It is the design of this work, to obviate some of the difficulties and objections that may lie against the Bible, and to present in a brief space the proofs of its full authority. I shall blend in this aim, for the purpose of convenience and perspicuity, the authenticity and Divine origin of the Scriptures. I have endeavored to be short and plain, so that neither a very long time nor very much learning will be required, to read and understand this volume. It is meant to be suggestive, rather than demonstrative. Trains of thought, we trust, are started, that can be carried out to correct results without the help of another mind. The reader will follow, in these pages, one who has himself contended hard with difficulties and doubts, but has been relieved, through the blessing of God, by a course of reasoning not unlike the one indicated in this work.

W. WARREN.

UPRON, OCT. 21, 1852.

INDEX.

	PAGE.
The classic sentence, - - - -	13
The counterpart—the Volume, - - - -	14
The great question, - - - -	15
The cardinal points, - - - -	16
The province of reason, - - - -	17
It determines the proof and the sense, - -	20
FIRST argument—presumptive evidence, -	22
A revelation might be expected from God, -	22
Man needs one, - - - -	23
The ancient moralists, - - - -	24
Modern skeptics, - - - -	24
Expectation from failures, - - - -	26
Objections answered, - - - -	27
Man not himself without the Bible, - - -	29
The fishes of the cave, - - - -	30
Views of Aristotle, - - - -	30
The argument applied, - - - -	31
Analogies and illustrations, - - - -	32
Religious tendencies of man, - - - -	34
Arguments from other provisions, - - -	37

	PAGE.
The expected book, where found? - -	38
SECOND argument—from prophecy, - -	40
The natural gifts of man, - - -	41
Not endowed with forecast, - - -	41
The future hidden—reasons why, - -	41
Nature of this evidence—from prophecy, - -	43
Instances of fulfilled prophecy, - -	44
New Testament predictions, - - -	47
Prophecy comprehensive, - - -	47
The fabulous mirror—its counterpart, - -	49
Inspiration and imposture, - - -	51
Evidence from prediction accumulative, - -	53
Time reveals error and imposition, - -	55
The position and testimony of Christ, - -	57
His sanction of the Old Testament, - -	58
His authority final, - - -	63
The Old Testament preliminary to the New, -	64
THIRD argument—the works of God, - -	66
The works and word of God compared, -	67
Each has difficulties and seeming discrepancies, -	67
God's works as viewed in Geology, - -	69
The science that treats of the races, - -	70
The history of providence and of nations, -	71
Agreement in their general outline, - -	72
The effect of their study the same, - -	74
Their appeal to the natural emotions the same,	75
Transition from the natural to the supernatural, -	80
Theory of miracles, - - -	80
False and true miracle compared, - - -	81
Miracles expected of those sent from God, -	83

	PAGE.
The sanction given to truth by miracle, -	86
God honors and owns special miracles, -	87
Defeat and confusion of ancient jugglers, -	88
New Testament miracles again, -	90
No motive in the case to deception, -	91
The course of the apostles ingenuous, -	91
Their <i>words</i> as valid as their <i>works</i> , -	92
The foreign ambassador, -	93
A seal required from one sent of God, -	94
The gift of miracle a matter of prophecy and promise,	96
OBJECTIONS—Bible abounds in unsanctified sayings,	99
Styles of the writers differ, -	100
There are things in the Bible unworthy of God,	102
There are mysteries and hard sayings there, -	105
FOURTH argument—from experiment, -	111
A new science or art is tested, -	111
The structure and style of the Bible considered,	113
The Book compared with human compositions, -	114
The opinion of a learned civilian, -	114
The achievements of the Bible—its fruits, -	116
The experiment of the supposed suns, -	117
The witnesses examined, -	119
General effects, -	123
The monument, -	124
Bible the key to prosperity and safety, -	126
The magician—the oracle of gems, -	128
The Bible in various circumstances, -	129

APPENDIX.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

	PAGE.	PAGE.
The position and importance of the question discussed,	134,	refers to 15
The gift of prescience considered,	136,	" 43
The curse of Canaan,	138,	" 44
Extract from Stuart,	141,	" 58
Extract from Addison,	144,	" 73
Extract from Porter,	146,	" 102-4
Extract, the place where we meet God,	155,	" 112
Tropical language,	156,	" 113
German Theology,	163,	" 122
Creeds,	167,	" 129
Changes of Time,	170,	" 46, 71
Philosophy of the Bible,	171,	" 72, 129
Spirituality of the Psalms,	173,	93, 112, 131

THE
SPIRIT'S SWORD:
TRUTH DEFENDED.

CHAPTER I.

The classic sentence—Its counterpart—The great question—The perilous voyage—Reason and revelation—The need of established points and standards—The exact province of reason—The great question that of testimony and interpretation.

WE are told that an ancient renowned people had in their possession a *sentence*, which they held in the very highest veneration. They looked upon it as having come down to them directly from the gods. They so much admired its classic taste and moral beauty, that they caused it to be written in shining capitals over the entrance to their most magnificent temple, and in

bold relief upon the walls of their sacred palaces.

The world now are in possession, not of a single sentence merely, but of a whole VOLUME, which is regarded as having come down to man from the living God. It has for its topics, if we are to credit its claims, not the fables of mythology, nor the traditions of misty antiquity; but the great truths of Heaven. It goes back of history and tradition, and professes to give us an account of the infancy of time and of earth, of the first day and the first man, and the first ages of the world. It assumes to go forward of history, also, and lift the veil of the future, and open a radiance through unmeasured time, whose last beam rests on the bar of God, or mingles with the effulgence of heavenly things. It claims to "have God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."

This book, attended with various sanctions, presents itself to our consideration and confidence. It claims to be an absolute

and complete revelation from God. It assumes the immense responsibility of shaping our course through an unlimited future. How are we to regard this claim? How shall we treat this wonderful Book? Shall we honor it only as a relic of past ages; as a record of the customs and sentiments of obsolete times; as a mere specimen of the style and literature of the ruder periods of earth, or shall we yield our lives and hearts to its authority? Shall we come to its pages in the spirit of adventurous speculation, or of an intelligent, but unquestioning faith? This question exceeds every other in importance. Rightly answered, it helps to settle every other. There is no question or interest on earth in which man is concerned, that can be permanently established till doubts pass away from this point.* Till this great matter that involves the authority of the Bible is settled, confidence is shaken, faith is unhinged, the mind of man is afloat, and moral elements and principles are all in confusion.

* See Appendix A.

Let me then say, that in the sphere of thought and of faith, as well as in the physical world, we must have cardinal points, standards, stars, by which our views, and course, and confidence, are to be guided. In the moral sphere, moreover, we must have fixed points and lines, rather than arithmetical and imaginary ones. Faith, as well as reason, requires discrimination, distinctions, differences, and boundary lines, by which the domains of truth and error are visibly and for ever separated. It is with peril that we pass through these wilds of opinion and error without the help and guidance of the greater lights of the world. Where reason falters, and the eye of conscience grows dim, and the lights of learning and experience fail, we need settled points and principles. We need an authoritative standard and umpire, at whose tribunal these great moral questions may be promptly decided. We want the compass and the chart; fixed stars, and unsetting suns. Our course through the changes and counter-currents of life is made safe, only when directed by unfailing wisdom.

This is the place, perhaps, to remark, that what pure reason teaches, or rejects, cannot be a matter of special revelation. For whatever is known *without* the aid of revelation, by the spontaneous suggestions of reason and moral sense, cannot be properly regarded as a special communication from God. That which we clearly see by star-light, is not certainly shown us by the sun; so, likewise, whatever we discover by the light of nature, or the slender rays of reason, cannot be said to have been given us directly from God. Again, that which reason necessarily rejects as palpably absurd and impossible, could not be established by any force or form of testimony whatever. For instance, we could not possibly believe that there was some thing previous to the existence of that which is eternal, even though the Bible itself should declare this. We could not believe that there were separate mountains in the Holy Land without a valley between them, even though it was recorded as a matter of fact in the Scriptures. The ground that revela-

tion occupies, therefore, lies *between* the limits where frail reason teaches and establishes, and where pure reason justly revolts and rejects. And a wide field, to be sure, is this! Most of the great interests of man lie included between these limits.

And it is a matter of special interest to remark here, that almost every thing that is revealed in the Bible is in itself *probable*; and that every thing there revealed is possible. A careful examination will, I think, convince the reader of this fact. But if this is true, all that is contained in the Bible can be readily believed, provided the testimony upon which its authority rests be divine.

It may be well to remark, moreover, that the province of reason in its relation to revelation, is not to determine what should be, or ought to be revealed, but simply the *facts* of revelation themselves, and the *authority* upon which these communications and facts rest. Reason, therefore, in this case, has only to do with the science of interpretation, and of testimony. Having settled these,

it has nothing further to do, but to give over the truths and sanctions and mysteries discovered in revelation, to the faith, and the conscience, and affections. It were preposterous for reason to undertake to settle the great matter, as to what ought to be, and ought not to be, in the perfections and government of God. If reason had the power to do this, a special revelation would be superfluous and impossible. Why need we to be taught of God directly, if reason alone is qualified to judge and guide in the great matters of faith and responsibility? Hence the absurdity of that philosophy, styling itself theology, that brings every thing found in the Bible, to the tribunal and decisions of mere reason. It makes reason to be the special revelation, and Scripture the frail interpreter; reason the sun, Scripture the stars. The critical speculative powers, the interior, or higher consciousness, these are the oracle, the bar of decision, the throne of judgement, the greater luminaries, to which the lesser lights of Scripture must yield, or in the presence of which, fade away!

The question to be answered, therefore, in this investigation, relates principally to the testimony upon which the real authority of the Bible is to stand. Is this testimony conclusive? Can the great interests of earth and the soul be entrusted to frail reason, or to the conflicting decisions of human judgement? Is conscience a sufficient guide, in this eventful career of human existence? Are the dreams of sentimentalism, the visions of speculation, the vagaries of unbridled thought, or the embryos of unsettled science, to become our guide in this world of perils and probation? Are these to be taken as rival claimants to our confidence, with the old fashioned Scriptures? It becomes us to pursue these enquiries that refer to the testimony and authenticity of the Bible, with the utmost candor and caution. We are in times when men are tempted to install these fickle standards over what others regard as the infallible Lights of heaven. The laws and lights of earth are too often allowed to take the precedence of those from above.

The present enquiry is this: Shall this Book hold a secondary position, or, the very highest place in our confidence? Shall this volume be held in universal doubt and distrust, or shall it take the throne of our confidence and regard? Shall it be taken as our chart in life's perilous voyage, or shall it be thrown overboard?

CHAPTER II.

Arguments from reason—Presumptive evidence—What might we venture to expect from God—And in view of the necessities of man—The condition of the world without the Bible—The ancient systems—The skeptical schools—The failure of other systems encourages the expectation of a revelation—Objections considered.

Is it contrary to reason to expect from God a special guide? Is it not rather consonant with sound reason and just analogy to look for such a guide, if the gift would be a favor to man, and consistent with the Divine perfections? I think no *presumptive* argument could be urged against such an expectation; while there are very strong preliminary reasons in its favor. We should be led to hope, from the known perfections of God, that he would reveal himself to his perishing creatures. His wisdom and goodness encourage this expectation. He has boundless knowledge from which to furnish materials for such a

work, unlimited resources of power to remove obstacles, and open avenues to the convictions of men, and infinite goodness to incline him to such a course, if there were no good reasons against it. He is indeed able and willing to do all that infinite benevolence, comprehending all interests, shall require.

And then there are human necessities in the case. Man needs a revelation. He is lost without one. The state of civilization and mental culture the world over is at the lowest ebb where the Christian religion has not found its way. What do we find the moral and social state of man to be, in those lands, where only the light of nature, and the rays of reason have penetrated. We must confess that by wisdom the world knows not God, — that without a revelation man is unprofitable and unfaithful, is untrue to himself and to the great ends of his existence. So long as the race gropes in the candle light of nature, without a written revelation, society

will sink lower and lower in atheism and moral midnight.

Not a few of the ancients, who were eminent in wisdom and learning, lost confidence in their systems of philosophy, as a means of reforming the world. They were forced to the unwelcome conclusion, that their systems of morality, however truthful and excellent in themselves, were wholly inadequate to reach and remove the moral wretchedness of man. They admitted, that unless some one of higher authority and power than they possessed, should come to earth to instruct and guide men, the world would continue to grope in darkness and perish. Such were the despairing views, the wisest of men were forced to take of the world's prospects and perils without a special revelation.

But what advance has the wisdom of modern ages been able to make upon the philosophy of ancient times? Have the cold, negative theories of this or previous ages, sufficed to reform the world? We

might safely conjecture that if the ancient moralists, with their excellent systems and treatises, failed to enlighten and reform the nations, the skeptical philosophy of modern times would only serve to make the darkness visible. The systems of the ancients were positive, vigorous, and serious; but the philosophy of the skeptical schools is loose, negative, and sentimental. What ray of hope can we rationally cherish, that theories so destitute of stirring truths, of earnest and high moral sanctions, can ever effect any favorable change in the moral world? If the ancients, who taught the doctrines of immortality and of personal accountableness, failed to awaken the conscience and reform the life, what short of absolute defeat could be expected from those who utterly deny the great truths of revelation, and seek to banish from the faith and fears of men, the very idea of a future life, and a hastening judgment? How far short, therefore, even of the moral standard set forth by the ancient schools, must the disorganizing theories

and skeptical opinions of the present age fall, in point of real reformatory power ! What man's highest wisdom has failed to accomplish, weakness and a faltering confidence cannot be expected to reach and achieve. The world's regeneration is to be the work of special wisdom and power. Unenlightened by revelation, the nations, as a general fact, are filled with various superstitions, gross idolatries, and the most degrading forms of vice.

We should venture, therefore, to expect, both from his own perfections and the ruin and helplessness of man, that God might, in special mercy, reveal himself to the world; provided such a step were practicable, and consistent with all interests and his own glory.

But it is objected, that this argument proves too much ; that it would lead us to look for a revelation to visit the whole human family, and without the delay of long ages. But it is remarked here, that man cannot present a *claim* on Heaven for a revelation. It is neither his right, nor

his due, nor desert, in a moral point of view. If bestowed at all, a special revelation must be regarded as a gratuity — a gift — and not as a matter of obligation on the part of Heaven. And, again, God often allows his plans and work to be executed in part by human hands. It becomes the privilege of human agents to co-operate with God, in carrying out his holy purposes. There is consequently a long delay often in the fulfilment of the most beneficent designs. Again, God is seldom *in haste* in his works of judgment or of mercy. Infinite reasons deter him from acts of precipitancy, except where justice and truth require promptness. And analogy, also, drawn from the Divine operations in other respects, would lead us to look for the principle of discrimination in this, as in all other special gifts from Heaven. Favors that are sovereign and special, though provided for all, are not always equally and at once bestowed. It follows that blessings such as might be expected, both from the goodness of God and the

necessities of lost man, are not always immediately and universally distributed. In scattering abroad his mercies, God means so to act as to show to all that they *are mercies* simply, and that their dispensation rests on sovereignty, rather than on any obligation on his own part. .

CHAPTER III.

Man is not properly himself without a revelation—The sightless fish of the cave—Views of Aristotle—His argument applied—Various illustrations—The argument expanded—The demand of the moral and religious nature—Argument from the other provisions of God—Where shall we look for this revelation.

ANOTHER *presumptive* argument that the Bible is from God, is found in the fact, that man feels the need of such a help, in his moral and mental nature. He fails to reach his own real developement and consciousness without it. He is not truly himself without a special revelation from God. He stumbles and falls without the lamp of God in his hand. The human mind has never risen to a full consciousness of personal power and dignity, except under the light of a direct revelation. Man has never attained the true idea of his own proper individuality and responsibility, without light from above. Where

the Bible has not gone, nor the greater lights of Heaven shone, there man grovels and gropes. He is elevated but little above the mere animal in his moral and intellectual appreciations. If there are exception to this statement, they only prove its general correctness. We then state, that man *needs* a revelation, in order to a full consciousness and realization of himself. It is essential to his truest and highest developement.

In a small lake found in the Mammoth Cave, there are said to be fishes that are without eyes. There is not wanting in them the anatomy, the socket, the indentment; but, on account of the absence of the medium of vision—the genial light,—there is no developement of sight. So, the moral and mental powers of man are *dwarfed*, without the greater lights of Heaven.

The argument to prove the existence of a God, used by Aristotle, applies to the present subject. He declared, in view of a common necessity in man for the idea of the infinite, that if there were no God, we

should have to *invent* one. He meant that man was not himself without the force of this great idea, that neither individuals nor nations could reach their highest development and glory, without the pervading influence of this fundamental belief.

It is easy to step from this point to another. Man can no more attain his true moral and mental dignity, without a *perfect guide*, than without an *infinite God*. He has the same fixed necessity for the idea and influence of a revelation, that he has for the knowledge and worship of an infinite God. It is indeed true, that the knowledge of the true God depends very essentially on this special light of Heaven. The lesser lights of philosophy and reason *may*, indeed, if followed, guide us to a knowledge of the true God. And yet that knowledge has never extended much beyond the light of revelation. A perfect law man must have, in order to a true moral elevation. A standard of absolute truth and trust he must possess in full confidence, in order to a complete moral and intellect-

ual maturity. Man would deify himself, or a thousand inferior forms, without the ennobling idea of a God; so is he prone to regard himself as inspired, or every other dreaming pretender, till he finds the true Light, that lighteneth every man. The argument stands thus: as this inborn necessity in man for the idea of a God goes to prove presumptively that there is such a being, so the same deep necessity for an infallible guide and standard, leads us to expect this gift from the hand of God. The universal necessity favors the probability of the actual provision in the case. If man fails of rising to his true native dignity without a special guide from Heaven, we might rationally hope that such a guide has been given him. And if the Bible meets these high moral necessities, and tends to

- elevate man to his true dignity and glory, we are compelled to consider this Book as a special gift of God.

If the eye sickens and shrivels without the light, but expands and brightens into beauty with it, we argue that the light is

made for the eye, and the eye for the light. If the ear decays without vibrations from the air, and the lungs also perish when closed from it, but both are pleasurably excited by its presence and elasticity, it proves that these were made for the air, and the air for these. If the phenomena of the planets could be easily explained upon the supposition of a more distant one, yet undiscovered, but in no other way, it would seem evident that there must be yet another planet to be added to the system. And if all celestial changes and mysteries could be easily accounted for on the supposition of there being in distant space a central orb, around which all other systems revolve, and all science and calculations went to confirm this theory, but were involved in a labyrinth of absurdities and difficulties without it, we should be forced to the probable conclusion that such a theory must be founded in truth.

The use we would makè of these suppositions is the following: Man perishes morally and intellectually without those great

truths that emanate from the Scriptures, and cluster around the idea of a God. The eye no more certainly perishes without the light, nor the ear and lungs without the air, than do the moral eye and sense without the clear light and the higher laws of Heaven. As the paths of the more distant planets were ascertained with a high degree of probability from the irregularities and anomalous tendencies of the planetary system previously discovered, and as the hypothesis of a central sun is made probable by celestial phenomena that are inexplicable upon any other supposition, so the innate necessities and tendencies of individual and associated man, all meeting and harmonizing in these great truths of revelation, help to give conclusiveness to the presumptive evidence by which it is confirmed.

In presenting the presumptive arguments in proof of the Divine authority of Scripture, we are forced to make much of man's religious tendencies. He naturally surrounds himself with a spiritual world. He

instinctively places over himself a spiritual sceptre. He acknowledges himself bound by the highest moral obligations. Man is universally susceptible to religious influences and appeals; and where true religion is lost, superstition of some kind is installed in its stead. Man was made to contemplate and admire, to love and adore, to believe, and obey, and worship. He is a religious being,—has spiritual sympathies, conceptions, and aspirings, and these can be met and satisfied with nothing short of the perfect and absolute. Now, whenever these tendencies are disappointed or checked, the spiritual nature collapses, the wings of faith falter, and man fails to reach his appointed dignity and destiny. If external realities do not correspond to his internal necessities, he looks forth into emptiness, his anticipations are crushed, and he reacts and preys upon himself. God's image within him grovels, and the imperishable nature pines. But let the idea of a personal God and confidence in a perfect guide be restored to his faith, and

he is in a new world; the moral and mental powers feel the force of a fresh resurrection. His rational necessities and cravings are satisfied, and the moral splendor of the primitive man is comparatively regained. Light from above rests upon his path, attractions from the great centre bring him under the control of new influences, and urge him onward in a new career, toward a new destiny! He has now a new form of life, is the highest style of man, and walks erect among the sons of God.

The views above expressed are only an expansion of the preceding argument. They give plausibility to the *presumptive* evidence in favor of the full authority of the Bible. If this book every where gives the human mind a start and an impulse toward perfection, and urges man on through difficulties and temptations, and puts upon him a finishing glory, where shall we place it, except upon the catalogue of God's greatest works? That which takes the marble block from the cold quarry, and gives it the figure and fashion of man, and

puts upon it breathing beauty, is the highest style of art. But to take the man *himself* from earth, and break him off from the degrading associations of sense and sin, and change the stone into spirit, and turn his lost nature into the image and fashion of his Saviour, is an achievement which nothing short of a Divine art can effect. The book that meets our moral wants and miseries, and raises us into fellowship with heaven, is scarcely to be ascribed to a human authorship. He who made the spirit, and awakened its consciousness and aspirations, has he not made provision to satisfy its deepest necessities, and its strongest cravings?

We have, indeed, a *day* that is sacred; the Jews had a *house* that was holy: there has lived a *man* that was perfect as such, and Divine even in his human nature: and God has given us *exact truth* in the kingdoms and sciences of nature. He has given us a *law*, too, written upon the scroll of creation, afterward upon fleshly tablets, that answers to a perfect conscience. In

these things God has been true to man. He has been *generous* as well as just. He has put his own impress upon time and art, upon man and earth, and has he not put his own seal upon some one *Book* of all that have ever been written? Has he given us the perfect in every thing else, and not in this highest human necessity? Has he given us the perfect in science, to inform and expand the mind, but failed to give us any counterpart to this in the moral kingdom, to meet our spiritual necessities? We are led rather to expect from the other gifts of God, and the wants of man, that the same hand that has supplied so profusely all other necessities, has also provided for this highest human need.

But where is this book? To what star in the literary firmament shall we look as our fixed, infallible guide? Among the many claimants to our confidence and suffrage as an unerring standard, upon which shall our choice fall? Which of all the books that have been written, and of the various rival revelations, is to be taken as

the Word of God? Where shall we find that volume whose contents are truth unmixed with error, — that sure guide, such as man needs, and might dare to expect, that answers to the perfect in other things, and to the nature and destination of the soul immortal? In what age has it appeared? To what nation has it been given? In what form and garb has it come to earth? Is it the Vedas of the ancient Hindu? or the Shasters of the learned Bramin? Is it the Koran of the Moslem? or the volumes of Confucius, Plato, or Swedenborg? Where do we find this Book of books, but in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, standing in the solitude of their glory as the light and guide of the world?

The foregoing we offer as *presumptive evidence*, or an *a priori* argument, in favor of the divine authority of Scripture.

CHAPTER IV.

Argument from prophecy—Man's natural gifts—He has not forecast—All for the best—Reasons why he is forbidden to see the future—Nature of this evidence—Some illustrations of fulfilled prophecy—Sons of Noah—Ishmael—Shiloh—The four kingdoms—Still other instances—New Testament predictions—Genuine prophecies refer to a system or chain of events.

I PASS now to another form of proof. The Bible throughout is put upon the test of the fulfilment or the occurrence of foretold events. It stands or falls upon this ground. Neither of the pretended revelations just referred to, have ventured beyond the limits of safe conjecture in this direction. A book that should base its authority and claims to inspiration on the ground of the faithful fulfilment of extended and comprehensive predictions, original upon its own pages, would furnish the evidence from itself, of the validity or falsehood of its claims.

Man has indeed the gift of memory, but not of forecast. He has power to retrace the past, but not to survey the future. That which *has been* may be definitely recalled and reviewed, but that which is *yet to be* is reached only by special revelation, or uncertain anticipation and conjecture, save as we follow down the illuminated track of prophecy.

An arrangement that shuts out from the present view the occurrences of the future, is undoubtedly a benevolent one. An indiscriminate knowledge of coming events would tend to unfit men for present duties. The anticipation of future evils would prey upon the present, and dry up the spirits. Or the prospect of coming joys would tend to make present pleasures insipid, or present burdens insupportable; and the passing hours, meanwhile, would move on wearily; and greedy anticipation would exhaust beforehand the pleasures that would otherwise have surprised and delighted us. Life's blessings are best enjoyed, and its burdens most easily borne,

one by one. Enjoyment would be changed into bitterness, contentment into disquietude, if the curtain that separates us from the future should be at once lifted. And besides, the "angel of hope" that scatters the future over with bright prospects, mingling with shades of uncertainty the highest possibilities, spreading and bridging the vales of doubt and danger, with cheering contrasts and exciting prospects, would never visit the habitations of men, gladdening their desponding hours, and urging them onward and upward, except from the fact that the future lies for the most part concealed from the present view.

And then the uncertainty that attends future things has a salutary influence upon the present. It lays a pressure of motives upon the conscience. It prompts to present duty and faithfulness. As we know not what shall be on the morrow, the uncertainties of the future, connected with its possibilities, and vast events, serve to stimulate us to exertion to meet its exigencies.

But more than this; the gift in question of

ordinarily * foreseeing future events would obliterate one of the stoniest pillars of proof upon which rests the authority of revelation. One of the peculiarities of the Scripture writers is that they precisely foretold future events. In this they transcended their natural gifts and powers. This fact proves that God was with them. To unfold the future in its grand outlines and definite history, is as exclusively the work of God, as it is his prerogative to know and to fix the sublime events of that future. And whoever have definitely revealed the events of coming time, in their connected relations and minute details, must have written as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

How does the case stand with the Scripture writers? Have they this seal of Divine authority, such as the definite fulfilment of prophecy stamps upon their works? Whoever carefully examines secular history and compares it thoroughly with the predictions of the Bible, will be

* See Appendix B

struck with their wonderful coincidences, and the manifest and manifold fulfilments of the latter. A few instances must suffice as examples.

How perfectly has the prediction concerning the three sons of Noah been fulfilled. The descendants of Shem and Japhet are now filling the three civilized quarters of the globe, while the sons of Ham are inheriting the curse.*

Again, the words forespoken of Ishmael, how exactly have they been verified! His descendents are to this day *wild men*, that have never been tamed. And wherever found, whether in their native Arabia, or among the ridges of Korassin, or in the wastes of the desert, this race is every where fulfilling the word spoken of the outcast son, that his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him.

Again, the barbarous nations that vexed and destroyed Israel have, according to the precise words of prophecy, long since

* See Appendix C.

perished, and in the precise form that was foretold; and their destroyers, also, have shared a similar destruction, according to the literal prediction.

And in fulfilment of the writings of the Old Testament, the sceptre departed from Judah, and the seed of Israel were driven out, and scattered to and fro upon the earth. And yet in their wanderings, and under their heaviest judgments, they have maintained their national peculiarities and identity the world over, awaiting the time when the sceptre shall return again, either in a national or spiritual form, to that prophetic people.

But according to the exact promise a star rose out of Jacob, and the Shiloh founded a kingdom, which has come to spread across the seas, and is extending its borders over the globe; while the proud sovereignties of Greece and Rome, with their glittering isles, and golden ages, and rich dependencies, have passed away for ever.

The four kingdoms have indeed fallen,

as was foretold of them. The head of gold, the arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and feet of iron and of clay, have long since been broken to powder, and mingled with the prostrate ruins of earth. But if the bold artist should attempt to revive those four kingdoms, of Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, in one expressive and truthful column, he could not do better than to reproduce, as faithfully as possible, the image described by Daniel. Or if some admirer of the past should wish to immortalize in verse those venerable kingdoms, he could not expect to rival, either in imagery or incident, the descriptions given by the prophet, long before the scenes themselves transpired.

And Nineveh, unknown until recently as to its exact site; Babylon, still the home of the bittern and the owl; Tyre, a lone rock where fishers spread their nets to the sun; and Egypt also, long since the basest of kingdoms, are all standing; as they have been for thousands of years, as monuments to the truth of Scripture prophecy.

And so definitely was the time foretold of Messiah's coming to his temple, that when he actually appeared, the world were in general expectation of him. Even *Pagan* nations, having caught some of the traditional rays of revelation, or taught by a silent inspiration, were anticipating the coming of a Divine personage from Heaven, and a golden age of good.

Time would fail me to more than glance at the New Testament predictions. They refer to the Messiah's coming, just at hand; his miraculous birth and works, his wonderful character and kingdom, with the wonderful circumstances of his death and resurrection. They relate, also, to the destruction of Jerusalem, the fate of the stubborn Jews and faithful Christians. They sketch, too, the triumphs and glory of the future church.

These predictions, from first to last, hold out to our view, a vast connection of events, that have distinguished the different ages and eras of the world. The unfoldings of prophecy have presented a

historical panorama, or comprehensive outline of the successive events and ages of time. And the predictions of the New Testament, we are to regard as *supplementary*, so to speak, to those of the Old, as are the great events there recorded, a fulfilment of ancient prophecy, and a counterpart to the early history of the church.

Such is the scroll of prophecy, and it clearly stamps the writings of Scripture as a revelation from God. He that has this gift, looks through the glass of Omniscience, and in directions and into depths which the unaided mind has not power to do.

CHAPTER V.

The fabulous mirror—Its true counterpart—Sooth-saying, and the like—Divination and inspiration, false and true oracles compared—The proof from prophecy accumulative—Time detects imposture and reveals error—The true prophet worthy of confidence in all he reveals.

WE read in the fabulous records of antiquity, of a *mirror*, with properties so rare that things remote and near at hand, before and behind, above and beneath, could be distinctly seen, at the same view, by the beholder. Such a mirror have we in the Bible. So true is this book to the past and the future, to heaven and to earth, that by a right use of it, we may discern events far distant and near at hand, things above and beneath, past and to come, in one comprehensive view. Here, in forms and glory that answer to no finite conceptions, we behold the uncreated God, seated upon his dazzling throne. Around

him is a view of Heaven, of ineffable splendor and beauty. We see its shining orders and ranges of worshippers, all reflecting the bright perfections of the throne. In dreadful contrast, and in awful depths, we have a glimpse of Hell, the prison of eternal justice. We see, too, in this wonderful mirror, the new world just emerging from nothing. Now, the Spirit moves upon the chaos, bringing order out of confusion, perfection and beauty from darkness, in successive *dissolving views*. Now the firmaments appear, beneath and above. The green earth and intervening oceans are stretched out in magnificent contrast, and all is crowned with being and beauty.

Such are some of the views, of sublimest interest, which this prophetic mirror gives us. And must it not have come to us from the hand of God? Is not the gift of the seer a seal of inspiration? and are we not to confide in all the communications which writers, thus gifted, make to us? The sacred penmen possessed this gift, which proves that God was with them.

But we are met with various objections and difficulties. Ungodly persons pretend to the power of penetrating the future. Soothsaying and conjury have drawn after them admiring multitudes, and deceived the very elect. But divination has brought forth little else than delusion. The pretended communications of *familiar spirits* have been frivolous, senseless, and inconsistent. These oracles, indeed, even if worthy of confidence, do not possess a value to the world worth the pains of recording them.

But we have a different account to give of the genuine Oracles. The inspired prophets have spoken of the future in strains worthy of God, and have so linked together the chains of past and progressive events, as to constitute a harmonious and magnificent system. The light of their pens has thrown the glimmerings of unworthy pretenders into depths of shade. Their predictions present an august series of events, in themselves vast, consistent, and sublime, the loss of a single part or

link of which would be fatal to the whole chain. A false note in the great prophetic harmony would throw the whole into jarring discord and wild confusion.

But soothsaying, at best, dares to stand only on the brink of the future, hesitating, balancing; venturing and then retreating, and always relying on artifice, credulity, and conjecture. The oracles of divination have always been doubtful and disjointed, dubious, equivocal and fragmentary. The Pagan oracles have ever been famed for their ambiguity, as they have been notorious for self-contradiction and absurdity.

Not so the prophecies of Scripture. They are bold and adventurous,—are of vast variety, of prodigious extent, and of the sublimest import,—reaching from the fall of man to the final consummation. Their scheme embraces in one grand compass of design, an outline of Divine providence and of human history from their first unfoldings to their final developement. The rise and fall of nations as seen in the prophetic glass, instead of appearing as the work of

a blind chance, are clearly the successive parts of one stupendous plan, where each minute event and grand revolution holds a fixed relation to the great whole, and everything is helping to establish a kingdom which shall stand in its glory, after the changes of earth and time shall have passed away.

The evidence from prophecy in support of revelation is *accumulative*. It does not depend so much on the fulfilment of any one single prediction, as on the accomplishment of a series of events, and the fulfilment of a grand system of predictions. A random conjecture may turn out to be true, or not: a fortunate guess or hap-hazard prediction may be verified by corresponding occurrences. But these facts would do nothing to establish the authority of him who gave forth such utterances or assertions. The strength of proof given to the authority of revelation by the fulfilment of prophecy, lies in the accumulative nature of this evidence, — in the fact that a vast series and system of predictions have

been verified. The first fulfilment could have been accounted for on the ground of chance or luck. The probabilities that the second fulfilment was a matter of contingency, were vastly less. And so we proceed to the third, the fifth, and the tenth, but upon a ratio of improbabilities as to these occurrences being accidental, that shall exceed all conception. We have, therefore, upon the pages of prophecy, a growing proof, a rapidly accumulating demonstration of the truth of Scripture. We are forced to the conviction, as we peruse these writings, that they must have proceeded from the mind that planned and governs all things. For whoever has the power to seize beforehand the vast events of time, and combine them into harmonious and comprehensive relations, is in sympathy with him who views the end from the beginning. The writer who stakes the truth of what he declares upon the accomplishment of definite predictions, summons the revelations of future time to attest or refute the correctness of what he states.

And as time, the great detector of errors and falsehood, passes on its circle of ages, the reality or spuriousness of his communications will be brought out more and more to light. But nothing is more thoroughly tested by that which proves all things — the touchstone of time — than the truth of genuine prophecy. The facts or errors of all Bible predictions will continue to unfold and grow manifest as the ages pass away, till doubt gives place to demonstration.

It follows as a rational inference from what has been said, that the various *other* communications intermingled with faithful prophecy, are worthy of our confidence as coming from the same Divine source. For if the Spirit enabled prophets to speak that which was true in reference to what was *then future*, we are bound to believe them when they tell us what was *then past*. And if it appears that they spake the truth in reference to what was then future to them, but is now fulfilled to us, we are bound to believe what they have spoken in

reference to what is yet unfulfilled, or is now future to us. And if they have spoken the truth in respect to all the past and the future, in what they have stated, both as historic and prophetic, as the tongue of time thus far declares, are we not to believe them when they speak of doctrine and of duty, in threatening and in promise, and of our relations to time and to man, to eternity and to God?

CHAPTER VI.

The position and testimony of Christ—His sanction of the Old Testament—He would not endorse deception—The wise parent—The Jewish notions of the inspiration of their Scriptures—No appeal from the decision of Christ and his Apostles—The Old Testament preliminary to the New.

As we leave this department of proof, let us examine the position which the SAVIOUR held in regard to prophecy. We will assume here that the evidences of Christianity are admitted; that the testimony of Christ recorded in the gospels is established. We do not urge the fact here, that Christ was himself a prophet, and spake by his own original omniscience as well as by gifts conferred by the Father; we confine ourselves simply to the views he held with regard to the prophetic writings, and the other portions of the Old Testament. He authenticated those writings not only, but was an infallible inter-

preter of their sense. He gave his own unqualified sanction to the entire Old Testament Scriptures, including the prophecies and every other kind of communication contained in them.* From a large list of passages in which the testimony of Christ is thus given, I select only these few: "All things which are written of me in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, are true." Reference is here had to an ancient division or classification, which included all the books now contained in the Old Testament canon. Here we have, in the plainest language, and from the lips of the Saviour himself, a full endorsement of all the Old Testament writings, prophecies, and the rest. It is true, unbelief may cavil here, and ask how Moses could know anything of Christ, thousands of years before his appearing? and of the Prophets and the Psalmists, how they obtained information concerning Christ and the latter days? We answer: Indeed, not from the blind

* See Appendix.

magicians of their age, nor from diviners, nor those of familiar spirits! These deceivers had no knowledge of the vast events recorded in prophecy, and fulfilled in after periods of time. No conjurer of heathen or Jewish history, not even the sorceress of Endor, had any discernment of Christ or his kingdom, or of the marvellous events of the last days. The spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets, and not to the spirit of evil and darkness. These great events were reserved for the vision of men who should speak "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Christ could never have given the least sanction to imposture or deception. Those who were favored with such glorious views of the gospel dispensation, were inspired from above. It is evil men that love to deal in dark sayings. It is such as are inspired, if inspired at all, from beneath. But all those that have spoken of Christ and his kingdom in strains worthy of God, and have had the sanction of his testimony and interpretation, and of time also, to the authority

of their writings, are worthy to be believed, with an unquestioning confidence, and that, too, in all they have spoken. For God would not have entrusted those great truths that relate to Christ and his kingdom, to men who were the chroniclers of error in other respects. Every ascertained science in the kingdom of nature is found justly related to all other sciences, and seldom mixed and confounded with false systems. So the firmament, where God deigns to fix his true oracles, to shine as the stars and constellations for ever, are unspotted by false systems, or mock suns, or lawless stars of eccentric origin and perilous course. So that when Christ declares, in the passage above quoted, that all things that were written of him in the ancient Scriptures were true, he gave the whole force of his sanction to the prophecies and other writings of those Scriptures.

Again, he enjoins it upon the Jews to "search the Scriptures," for said he, "they are they which testify of me." And again he declares, "that the Scriptures cannot be

•

broken." Now these declarations cannot be reconciled with the belief that a part of the Old Testament writings are unworthy of our confidence. Would Christ have commanded the Jews to search the Scriptures, without qualification, if portions of them were false? Or could it be said with truth that the Scriptures cannot be broken, if parts of them were obsolete in their authority, or erroneous in their sentiments? And I ask, earnestly and reverently, could the Saviour of the world, who was the light that lighteneth every man, — who so loved the world as to give his life for its redemption, — could he have enjoined it upon his followers to read and reverence those Scriptures, if portions of them were false and hurtful? and this without first carefully pointing out those spurious parts, and putting all upon their guard against them. Did he not warn his disciples against the Pharisees, and the leaven of their doctrines? and also, against the false prophets and their flattering lies? Can any one

doubt as to what course the Saviour would pursue, in the case here supposed ?

Not even a natural parent of common sensibility and discretion, would put a book into the hands of a child, some portions of which were false and pernicious, and command that child to read and reverence that book, without first carefully pointing out and marking those parts that were injurious. And would not the blessed Saviour, who had so strong a love for the world and for the truth, and such a hatred of error and imposture, have done this same thing with respect to the Old Testament books, if they were spurious and pernicious ? We answer with emphasis, that he would.

I say, besides, that modern theories of inspiration touching the Old Testament, are an imputation, a reflection upon the honesty, or intelligence of the Lord Jesus Christ ! For if these views of those writings are correct, the Saviour either must have had incorrect views of them himself, and have spoken under misapprehension, when he gave his full assent and

sanction to their truth, or he dishonestly concealed, for the sake of effect, or to conciliate prejudice and to save appearances, his own real views and the real facts with respect to those writings! But this is ground which none but the infidel would dare to take.

It is not to be forgotten here, that the notions of the Jews concerning the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures were all but extravagantly high; and yet we never hear the *Great Teacher* uttering a word to shake or lower their confidence in their Scriptures. On the other hand, all he said was adapted to call their attention to those Scriptures, and to strengthen their confidence in them. How can we account for this fact, unless we admit that those Scriptures were Divine, or question the doctrine that the Saviour himself was Divine? It is safe for us to take the same view of those writings which Christ and his apostles were accustomed to take. No other view, I think, can stand the test of time, of true experience, or of sound phi-

losophy. These great lights of the world have taught us that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and was profitable, &c. It will be safe for us to hold the Bible, every part of it, in the same high veneration and confidence in which they held it, and replace the Scriptures on the same throne of authority, where they left them. For to call in question any part of those writings is to contradict the testimony and teachings of Christ and the apostles throughout. It is to impeach their character for honesty and truth. It is to mislead men, and benighten the world! I know of no appeal from the decision of Christ and his apostles. We have their words, here, as a wall of defence around the ancient Scriptures. Their testimony is a rock of proof, upon which the word of God will stand unmoved for ever.

And the New Testament is a fulfilment, an endorsement, as well as developement of the Old. It is the counterpart of the Old; an introduction of clearer light, of grander views, and fuller glories. It is as

another morning, bright and full, risen upon a milder noon. The first dispensation presents an array of types and figures, of statutes and prophecies, such as time, and the providence of God, have fully verified. These lights of law and figures, and prediction, converge to a full blaze of glory in the New Testament. All that was typical and prophetic in the former age, draws to a fulfilment in the latter. The exceeding dim radiations that threaded the earliest ages, the oracles, altars, and types that gave forth their first faint and fitful gleams, the clearer manifestations of the Divine will in the forms of law, and in the system of sacrifices, and the fuller and clearer light that poured from the minds and pens of prophets and psalmists, as brought to the test of the gospel age and glass, like the various lights of Heaven emitted from their myriad points, are all found to be the same light, emanating from the same celestial source; and all is brought, through the lens of the gospel, to the dazzling effulgence of final glory.

CHAPTER VII.

Recapitulation—The *works* of God interrogated—A resemblance expected between the two volumes—Both have difficulties—Apparent discrepancies—Their conflict premature—Geology—False philosophy refuted—Nature and Scripture have the same confirmation from this source—Origin and identity of the race—History of providence—Style and themes of the two volumes—Tendency of their study, &c.

WE will now pass to another form of proof. We have attended to the responses of reason in reference to a divine revelation: we have also listened to the voice of prediction, and marked the developments of providence in relation to this subject. We now turn to the *works* of God, and interrogate these in regard to the origin and authenticity of the Scriptures.

We should reasonably expect to find a resemblance between the *works* of God and the *word* of God. We should expect to find the same hand writing both in Nature

and in Scripture if both are from God. If God has both *acted* and *spoken*, we should expect that his actions and his words would correspond. If the great volume of nature, including creation and providence, has the Divine impress upon it, we should naturally look for something of the same style and spirit in the great volume of revealed truth, if there be one.

We are now prepared to assume that there actually exist a striking resemblance and continued analogies between the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and the works of God in nature. This correspondence is apparent to the uninstructed eye, as well as to the scientific investigator; though not, perhaps, to the same degree of assurance. It would be a pleasing task to trace out fully the resemblances between these two great systems or volumes of revealed truth. I propose, now, to indicate only a few.

Both nature and Scripture have their intricacies and mysteries, their depths and difficulties. If it were not so, it would

argue either the divinity of man, or the humanity of the great first cause! To see clearly to the depths of *creative* wisdom or *inspired* truth, man must either be elevated to an equality with the great Source of all, or that Power must be levelled or limited to the frail capacities of man. But we can adopt neither of these dilemmas. We should expect, therefore, to find, as proves to be the fact, that science has her Gordian knots, and Scripture its perplexing mysteries. In this they are alike, and if the latter had no depths unfathomable, it would be a grave objection to the doctrine of inspiration as applied to this volume.

Again, there are apparent discrepancies and contradictions, both in nature and in Scripture. There are laws and phenomena in both that are not easily reconciled upon a superficial investigation. We do not design to make a particular specification of them in this discussion. I would only remark in passing that when science shall become perfect in its investigations and

developement, and the exact laws of biblical interpretations shall have been clearly ascertained, the *seeming* contradictions in Nature and in Scripture will be reconciled, and the discrepancies between science and revelation will exist only in appearance, and the two great systems or volumes will be found to coincide throughout. It is therefore premature and profane to push science and Scripture into an unnatural conflict. It is as a war in Heaven. Let the true key of interpretation to both these volumes be found, and there can be no occasion for this conflict.

Again, God has deposited the records of creation and the archives of providence and of time in the deep foundations of earth; to be held in reserve against days of doubt and atheistical developements, as demonstrations and testimonials to the truth. So when skepticism has become bold, and cavils at the great facts of creation, and contends for the eternity of the present order of things, science brings triumphantly forth these records, or relics of the

earliest ages, from their long graves, to demonstrate the origin and providential developement of the present system of things.

And thus philosophy has been met and refuted on its own ground. Notice how exactly these records, written on stone tables, agree with the earliest records of Scripture. As recent discoveries, made in exhumed cities and temples, and those ancient hieroglyphics left upon mouldering monuments recently deciphered, go to confirm concurrent records of Scripture, so do the relics and archives found in the earth's deep beds, and engraved upon her everlasting walls, agree with the handwriting of God as given us in his word. The biography of our globe, therefore, and of its inhabitants, as well as the autograph of the Creator himself, is given us with unquestionable authority and distinctness in both volumes of his great revelation.

Turn now to the science that treats of the origin and identity of the race. It has had to contend with difficulties and falla-

cious appearances. And there are still men, learned in the sciences, who teach the doctrine of diversity in the origin of the races now on earth. It is proper, however, to remark here, that the theory of the original oneness of the human family harmonizes with the profoundest discoveries in science, and the obvious teachings of Scripture. It is least open to objections from reason, philosophy, or revelation, and may now be considered as fairly established. Sameness in mental and moral characteristics, as well as in general physical structure, together with the easy coalescence or union of the races, make it exceedingly unnatural to suppose that they have no essential or original affinity for each other.

Take, again, the history of providence, and of empires. The finger of nature points out great physical changes upon the earth: and it is perfectly clear, too, that great national reverses have taken place. Oceans and civilization too, have changed quarters of the globe. The races have

made their revolutions, as well as the planets. History and philosophy are each full of the records and the reasons of these changes. In these respects how exactly do the voice of Scripture and that of Nature agree. There is indeed a counterpart in revelation to the surprising developements of history and providence.

And if I may so express myself, the natural scenery of Scripture, and the spiritual aspects of nature, are in beautiful harmony. Their scenes, their landscape, so to speak, are thus brought into sympathy and symmetry. Both volumes have their heavens of glory, but of eclipse and cloud. They both have their earth, too, a beautiful, but a blasted paradise. Each has its old and *their* new world, *their* ages of civilization and of deterioration, and *their* periods of advancing and of ravishing prospects. Each system abounds in all that is beautiful in picture and in incident, in landscape and illustration. They agree, also, in their general exhibition of man and of the Creator. They present the

same* variety of divine attributes, blending, indeed, like the various elements of color, into one comprehensive attribute of love. Nature and Scripture present the same substantial view of providence. Seen in the mirror of either, there are inextricable mysteries that overshadow God's ways with the human family. And both reason and Scripture present the same prospects of retribution. Nature has a presentiment of future wrath, a pre-discernment through the clear eye of conscience, of treasured indignation, of impending retributions. The Bible, also, through all its pages, marks, in fearful lines, the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Its threatenings appeal to the human fears, and tell us, in language awfully expressive, that there is a Hell: Nature and Scripture give us the same view of virtue and of vice, of obedience to law, and of disregard to obligation. They give us the same views of patriotism and humanity, of

* See Appendix.

oppression and cruelty. Conscience and Scripture, reason and revelation, agree here. They teach the same doctrine in regard to marriage vows, the family relation, the rights of government, and of the governed. They teach the same doctrines of immortality and accountableness.

And then the careful *study* of these two volumes, tends to substantially the same results. Their influence upon the heart and mind are in no wise dissimilar. The study of Nature and of Scripture tends to elevate our views, and to humble our pride; to promote our growth in wisdom and in grace, and to take from us a spirit of self-confidence and undue conceit. The study of these great volumes imposes a check upon vice and irreverence, and tends to raise the thoughts and principles above self and earth, up to the Infinite Source of all.

Besides, the more thoroughly the volume of Nature and that of Scripture are studied, the more they will be admired. This goes to prove their perfection! Works of art that approach nearest to nature, will bear

the most thorough criticism and scrutiny; and will call forth the strongest sentiments of admiration. It is perfection, however, that never disgusts nor tires; and both Nature and Scripture are proved to be perfect, in that their patient study never disgusts nor wearies.

And it is asked if the natural emotions have not somewhat the same freedom and play in the Scriptures that they have in nature. Both these volumes abound in scene and incident, as has been remarked. What book is so natural and yet so supernatural, as the Bible? In both, extremes meet; the spiritual and the natural are each gratified. Nature is all miracle, in one sense. Her laws exhibit the ever present and uniform agency of the Infinite God. The Bible, too, abounds in miracle. In the infancy of the race, it reveals God as walking with man, as clothing him, as leading him by the hand, by night and by day. But as the race has come to be of age, the Deity has withdrawn, and secreted himself more behind the veil of natural laws. Man now walks upon the scene rather alone.

The parental hand that led him from childhood up to youth, is not needed now, as it was in the periods of his feebleness and ignorance. With those special manifestations at the last great era of the world's redemption and freedom, by which the authority and oracles of God were established, the Creator has withdrawn himself from the eye of sense, and is now to be viewed principally by the eye of faith.

And, besides, in a world like this, the natural and innocent emotions need to have a perfect developement. We have in both these volumes a field where the natural and spiritual sentiments may have full exercise. We have in both, the grand, and the awful; the beautiful, and the sublime. We meet on every side with contrast and striking alternations. We have in both creations, the picturesque and the new, as well as the monotonous and unchanging. Neither of these volumes exhaust the interest, or lose their freshness and charm. If the eye does not now behold the miracle, as a present fact in either, reason and faith are privi-

leged to expatiate upon higher wonders, and the inexhaustible varieties of the Divine munificence. So that the better these volumes are understood, the better are they appreciated. And if the influences of nature and creation awaken the voice of singing and of melody, so do those of Scripture awaken the lyre of the spirit to loftiest praise.

We would by no means confound natural and religious emotions. The naturalist is not always a christian, nor the christian necessarily a naturalist. And yet it is false to affirm that there is no affinity between these two great departments of study, and the *spirit* of the true son of nature, and the real child of God. The true christian delights in nature, though he does not see with a practised eye; and the real lover of nature is beside himself, if he does not behold and adore the God of creation. The enthusiasm awakened by the study of nature's volume, and that which the study of the Bible is adapted to produce, may be strangely different in its

relations to the moral emotions. So may either of these volumes be studied by different classes of persons, with equally opposite results. We have enough, however, to convince us, from the analogies above presented, that these volumes came from the same hand, and are adapted to produce nearly the same moral results.

CHAPTER VIII.

Recapitulation—View of Miracles—The false and true compared—Real miracles would be expected of those sent from God—Founders of Christianity based their authority upon them—Tricks of art and evil devices considered—Ancient jugglery, divination, and the like—These silenced by the voice and hand of God—New Testament miracles—No motive in them for deception—Those who wrought them hazarded everything by their position.

WE have thus far interrogated the works of God as found in the facts and laws of Nature, and also in the history and developments of Providence. But these are not the only ways in which the hand of God has operated to confirm the testimony of Scripture. If we mistake not, the Divine hand has *endorsed* those writings directly. We have referred already to the *declarations* of God as verified in history, but there is a sense in which his works—his *actions*—speak louder than his words.

We are brought now to the *transition* from the natural to the supernatural. There is an essential distinction to be made between an *ordinary* and a *special* act of God; though it is not always easy to draw the exact line between a natural and a supernatural event. There is also an essential distinction between operations to be referred to intelligences and powers above us in the spiritual spheres, and those special operations of Divine agency that occasionally, though not commonly, occur.

The popular theory of miracles is somewhat indefinite, and, perhaps, deficient. Every *wonder* certainly is not a miracle; nor is every marvellous work to be regarded as miraculous, nor indeed every apparent deviation from the course and laws of nature. We know as yet but very little concerning the systems, or extent of real nature. We know not how far created spheres and beings reach above us, nor how far they may stretch beneath us. Nor do we know how much agency they are suffered to exert upon the little spheres or few

laws with which we are conversant. The theory of established laws in nature does not conflict with the idea of the occasional *irruption* of superior agencies upon our circumscribed operations, or of anomalous occurrences and appearances, which are to be referred to causes strictly natural and secondary, though entirely hidden from our view. Much that is now plain would have seemed miraculous to the ancients, and some things that seem supernatural to us, will appear perfectly plain in future time. Nature's laws are, indeed, vast and complicated ; nevertheless, if we may be allowed to refer certain phenomena to intelligences and principalities that have their sphere intermediate between us and the Infinite, it will not conflict with the supposition that even these mysterious operations are themselves natural, and under the control and limitation of superior laws. Nor is it at all necessary to confound these perhaps superior and apparently anomalous operations in nature with the stupendous achievements of the Divine hand. Just how the

more extended and mysterious laws of the universe may at times derange the more limited and obvious ones, it may not be necessary for us now to know. But who will affirm that guardian angels or fallen spirits, in executing their kind commission or fell purposes upon earth, are utterly excluded from all interference with physical laws and agencies? If their activity is felt in the *moral* kingdom, disturbing the moral sphere and forces, how know we but that it may be felt at times in the natural? And besides, how can it be proved that what has heretofore taken place with reference to both moral and natural laws, through the medium of finite powers above and beneath us, does not even now actually take place, or may not under certain circumstances and limitations, hereafter? The miracle, properly considered, has ceased; its great end, as will be seen, has been answered; but that anomalies in the natural and moral kingdom, that all intrusions and irruptions upon our sphere of action and upon the forces and laws of uniform nature

from those invisible agencies and forces beyond us, have entirely ceased is by no means certain. We prefer, however, to speak hypothetically here and with caution rather than with absolute confidence.

A miracle is an event that occurs contrary to the laws of nature ; it is an act that contravenes the established course of natural laws.

It is a work, also, that must depart so widely from effects possibly produced by natural agents and causes as positively to surpass the power of finite beings. It must consequently transcend the dependent agencies and forces above us in the invisible sphere.

It must also be a work that is worthy of God and consistent with all his perfections. It must not be in conflict with either the wisdom, the dignity, or the glory of God. It must not be inconsistent with his benevolence, or his truth, or justice. If the miracle must be the work of infinite power, it must correspond or be consistent with all the Divine perfections. An act may be

performed by an art or power that surprises us and yet be wholly unworthy of God. Here is the principle: whenever a work or a wonder conflicts with either of the known perfections of God, it must be ascribed to some other agency than his.

Again, a miracle is wrought for some appropriate end. It is never an idle or unworthy act, done to gratify mere curiosity, or caprice. God cannot exert a useless, aimless, worthless agency. A miracle is always wrought to authenticate a Divine commission. No man can work a miracle, except God be with him. The miracle announces and confirms the Divine commission of him who performs it. It is a certificate or credential from the hand of God, to establish the commission and the message of him who has its seal.

Miracles would, therefore, be expected from those commissioned to introduce a new dispensation. They authenticate revealed truth by establishing the mission of those who proclaim it. It is difficult to see how a mission from God *could* be con-

firmed otherwise than by the sanction of a miracle. He who does a Divine act is to be credited when he professes to declare a Divine truth. His work confirms his word. If one is from God, so also is the other. The one is essential and sufficient to establish the truth and credibility of the other. And as God cannot lie, he could not lend his sanction or his seal to any kind of imposture.

CHAPTER IX.

The sanction given by miracle—Difference between true and false miracles noticed again—The defeat and confusion of ancient jugglers and diviners—New Testament miracles noticed—No motive to deception—The course pursued by the Apostles—The validity of their claim—The foreign ambassador—We should demand real miracles from those who claim to speak from God—The gift of miracles, a matter both of prophecy and of promise.

THE authority of revelation stands in part upon this pillar of proof. Its principal writers wrought miracles, and thus established their claim to inspiration. As was said of them, no one could do the works that they did, except God was with them. The Lord Jesus Christ challenged confidence and belief solely on this ground. He called on men to believe his works. The works that I do in my Father's name, said he, they testify of me.

The miracles that were wrought by the founders of Christianity were of a genuine

and unquestionable character. There was nothing of the doubtful and the flimsy in them — nothing artificial or incongruous. They were open and dignified, worthy of their Author and their end. They were above the power of men or angels to perform, or of art to imitate, or devils to counterfeit. They were wrought to establish a commission from Heaven which no other evidence could confirm.

It is worthy of remark here, that God has honored special miracles, wrought by his servants, by making them stand out in full relief and contrast from the wiles and tricks of mere pretenders. The things that they have aimed to do are easily distinguished from the genuine works of God. What magician has ever succeeded in changing water into wine, in stilling the tempest or the sea, in raising the dead to life, or accomplishing anything that could permanently benefit man? To invention and artifice there is an end, as also to art, imitation, or strategy; but there is none to the resources of Divine power. The more

you examine a spurious work or lying wonder, the more clearly you perceive its imposture; but the more patiently a Divine act or miraculous work is investigated, the more evident will its origin appear. As nature is above art, and science superior to invention or discovery, so are the oracles of God superior to heathen myths, and the mighty works of God to the tricks of men, or the devices of Satan.

The jugglery of the ancient magicians, how did it compare with the sublime miracles of Moses? Those evil men, when they saw their own power baffled, and the wonderful works of God multiplied before their eyes, were forced to confess that this was indeed the finger of God; a confession, indeed, that their own tricks and devices were not!

Notice in the book of Daniel the account of those visions and dreams of the king. Now there were not wanting around the Assyrian throne, men whose business it was to dispose of mysteries of that nature. But when visions and wonders were pre-

sented to them, that had reference to the final kingdom and the great truths of coming history, they were as ignorant and powerless as ordinary men. It took a *Daniel* to unravel mysteries that were treasured up in the Divine mind. Evil men and malignant spirits went to the full length of their chain, and were forced to stop even before the first beam of light, reflected from Heaven on the future, could be discerned. It was the privilege of humble, pious, holy men, who walked and wrought with God, to reflect this light upon human minds. In some such comparison or predicament as above described, have all pretenders in the sublime department of prophecy and miracle always been destined at last to stand. Their art has fallen short of the Divine art, their knowledge and power, of the Divine. They never have been able to transcend, with all their infernal helps and helpers, the actual laws of nature, in their widest relations. In all ages of time, the real miracle, wrought by the finger of God, in confirmation of a

commission to proclaim his truth, has differed in every element and feature from the wiles of evil men and spirits. God will not permit imposture, whether human or satanic, to confound his own established seal of prophecy and miracle.

The New Testament miracles were wrought by Christ and his apostles, and were confirmed by unimpeachable witnesses, both of friend and foe. These works were above art, or imitation, or finite power. Nor were they done in a corner, before a cabinet of conspiring or suborned witnesses, but openly, before the world. The scrutiny of both friend and enemy was welcomed, was *challenged*, but no deception was found. These works had all the marks of the true miracle. They were numerous, beneficent, and dignified. They were worthy of their Author and design, and were above the power of mortals to perform or feign.

But if the question of deception could here be entertained, it should be asked — what possible *motive* these men could have

had to practise fraud or imposition in this matter? They could have had no *personal* ends to answer, or interests to compass, by such a course. No conceivable motive or purpose could have urged them to act falsely, for it would be contrary to every earthly and selfish interest. No possible reason can be suggested to give plausibility to suspicions of impostur  on their part. For every natural consideration must have conspired to dissuade them from dishonesty in such a case. They had nothing to gain from success but personal danger and ruin, in this world; and if their system was false and their course one of imposition, they certainly had nothing to gain, if nothing to lose, in another world.

Indeed, the course pursued by the founders of Christianity can be explained only on the ground of great honesty and sincerity on their part. And their success in gaining the public ear and confidence, and establishing upon a firm basis the Christian system, can be accounted for only upon the fact, that God was with them and wrought

in them and by them, and spoke through them. No motive conceivable, save that of pure disinterestedness and a powerful Divine impulse, could urge men forward in such a cause to triumph over obstacles and establish, in the face of tortures and of death, the Christian religion. But they went forth preaching the Gospel everywhere, healing the sick, raising the dead, stilling the storm, and controlling the mighty elements and evils of nature. They were bold, intrepid, and indefatigable in their career, and steadfast in their testimony and sufferings to the end. They faced crucifixions and the flame, and this when everything earthly and selfish must have tended to dissuade them from their course, and force them to a recantation.

Now what these good men did, proves that God was with them; that he wrought in their works, and spake in their words. Men who with one hand wrought miracles, and with the other recorded imperishable but unpopular sayings, could have been moved by no other than the Spirit of the

living God. Were Moses and the prophets mistaken, think ye, when fresh from the work of miracles, they prefaced their solemn annunciations with a Thus saith the Lord? The Hebrew Psalmists — were they in error, or acting under the impulse of delusion, when they exclaimed, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me?" Did Christ make the patriarch of Israel to err, or did he put it into his lips to lie, when in the presence of heaven, he is made to give to the words of Moses and the prophets a higher significance and sanction than even the testimony of one who should rise from the dead? And the apostles, abounding in miraculous gifts and works; is it inconsistent to concede to them their claim, when they ascribe the truths they taught to the Holy Spirit? Thus high stands the authority of those who have professed to give us a revelation from God, and of whatever is authenticated or corroborated by the true miracle. ●

If a king sends a minister to a foreign court, with power to speak and act in his

name, he will give that minister undoubted credentials of his appointment. Nor would he be received at that court at all, till the seal of his sovereign was produced. So in the government of God, if he commissions men to speak to the world in his name and upon subjects of vast moment, we expect that he will give to them, as incontestible credentials of their commission, his well-known seal of miracles. 'How else could their authority be established? How else

- could they prove their mission, or authenticate their message? Have I a right to believe a fellow mortal, frail and fallible like myself, when he professes to speak to me from Heaven in words of Divine authority, when he gives me no proof of his commission, save his own simple, naked assertion? I expect him to speak to the sun or the moon, and that they will obey him and pause in their course. I expect him to speak to the day, and that it will vanish into night; or to the night, and that it will blush into morning. I expect him to still the raging tempest, or the agitated

2 .

sea; or to bring forth living water from the rock, or bring up the sleeping dead from their graves! I am not satisfied with a doubtful experiment, a marvel, a wonder, or an equivocal work; one that is unworthy of God, or that conflicts with either of his known attributes. I expect, and have a right to expect, something that is real and decisive, an act that no one would think of ascribing to a finite agency: I must look for something that would make an impression upon myself and all, somewhat like that made upon those of old, who confessed that it could not be denied that a notable miracle had been wrought by the Apostle's hand; or those who said, "This is indeed the finger of God!" With such a work before me, I am bound to receive the doer of that work as sent from God. And his *commission* established, I am bound to receive his message. And God has done, in the gift of his word to man, just as we should have expected. He has borne his Apostles witness, by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles. Of this we are

assured, not only by the sacred historians, but by the well authenticated testimony of secular writers of that age.

It will not be out of place here, to remark that the gift of miracles was pledged to the disciples and others by Christ himself. The working of miracles, then, was matter of positive promise, as well as of prediction. The truth of Christianity was, indeed, staked beforehand on the fact, that its founders would work miracles and wonders before the world. Those disciples and their successors had the promise of the Spirit to guide them into all truth. The Spirit, that searches all things, even the deep things of God, was to bring all things to their remembrance, and take the things of God and show them unto them. That promise was explicit, repeated, pregnant. And it was exactly consonant with the declarations of prophecy, that foretold the miraculous gifts and works of those in the last days. I need not refer now more particularly to these predictions and promises. I ask,

when were they fulfilled? Point out a prediction of olden times that has not been accomplished in its order. Are those that refer to future inspiration and miracles an exception to the great fact of fulfilment? And the *promises* of God, have they not every one of them been verified according to the exact condition and letter? Are they not all yea and amen in Christ? Who will assume to question these points? When, therefore, was this prediction and promise fulfilled? When was the all-guiding Spirit given? The answer must be, just when it was most needed! But when did those good men most need the Spirit to guide them? Was it when they preached, or when they wrote? Was it when they spake with their voices *words merely*, that were to die on the air, or when they wrote down with pen and ink, *imperishable sayings*, to work their way through time, and overturn its errors and superstitions, and fill the earth? Was the promised inspiration granted in the less, but withheld in the greater? We cannot so believe,

but must conclude that men who had the promise of the Spirit of God and were empowered to do the *works* of God, had also authority to speak the *words* of God. This power to work miracles, which was a matter both of prediction and promise, was claimed by the Apostles, at the very period when the Christian religion was to be established upon earth. And this work done—the Christian system authenticated and established in the world—this seal of miracles, like the types and figures of the Old Testament, had answered its end, and must vanish away.

CHAPTER X.

Objections—1. Bible abounds in unsanctified sayings—
2. Styles of the different writers differ—3. Things
found in the Bible unworthy of God—4. There are
mysteries there.

I WILL here devote a little space to objections.

1. "You call the Bible the Word of God; is not much of it the words of men?" I reply, we admit that the sayings of unsanctified men occupy a considerable portion of the sacred Volume. But is it not sometimes important that we have a faithful record of what both good men and evil men have said and done? It is expected in a witness, that he speak the truth, and the whole truth. And as God is truth, a faithful account of the sayings of wicked men, when needed to corroborate or illustrate the truth, may be, and may be called, the Word of God. Besides, truth in the

dialogue or dramatic style, such as is most natural to common life and familiar conversation, lies with great power on the printed page. We expect in the perfect painting, the shades as well as the lights; and in the perfect portrait, we look for the defective features as well as the natural graces. The Bible is the moral mirror of the world. It is a faithful panorama or painting of the different ages and customs; and its perfection appears, in part, from its exact truthfulness, its shades intermingling with the lights, and its recorded errors, crowding and shading its serenest truths.

2. "The styles of the Scripture writers differ." And what if they do? The stars, do they all shine with the same lustre? Are the handiworks of God all run in the same mould? What though the sacred thought does not flow in one unvaried channel, and the spirit of inspiration should deign to accommodate itself to the natural styles and tastes of men! This is not different from what we should naturally expect. Variety here contributes to unity;

and a greater beauty is given to the whole. The unity and perfection of the whole system is seen in the complicated but harmonious variety of the parts. God has made this world; but not all sea, nor all land! He made the heavens; but not all blaze, nor all blue! He made the landscape; but not all brook, nor soil, nor sea! And what if he has given us the counterpart of this variety in unity, in a perfect revelation! Should we expect him to impress upon the volume of his word, a stiff monotony, a rigid, wearisome sameness; or should we expect the light and the shade, the scene and the change, the picturesque as well as the uniform? Should we not rather expect in the volume of revelation, what we have in the works of nature, unity in the relief of variety, and variety blending into unity? Should we not expect the chorus, filled with various and opposite voices—the perfect harmony in endless diversity, and all this diversity contributing at once to the perfection of the whole?

3. It is said, that "There are things in the Bible that are unworthy of God." But how is this known? Who dares take the responsibility of saying this? And does not this objection apply equally to the *works* of God? Certainly this charge will lie against nature with the same force as against revelation. The skeptic, the pantheist, the philosopher, have the same interest in this objection that the Christian has. Little things are found in all God's works; and if they lie against the dignity and authority of revelation, they may be urged with equal force against the Divine authorship of nature. For we have, both in nature and in Scripture, the unseemly as well as the beautiful, the trivial and the sublime, the minute and also the grand. The earth is made up of atoms, the ocean of drops.* Animal and vegetable life dwindle away to an invisible point, where it escapes even the finest optics and instruments. And yet creation is the product of a perfect plan, the work of an infinite

* See Appendix.

mind and hand. And ought we not to expect in a revelation from God, the same general characteristics that are found in his other works? If nature, with its diversity and simplicity, is adapted to man and is fitted to develope and discipline his powers, should we not expect to find in revelation, coming from the same Author, and designed to elevate and sanctify the same moral beings, something like the same general peculiarities? We are prepared, therefore, to find in Scripture a record of *small* events, the account of trifling occurrences. We are not surprised to meet in this volume mere incidental suggestions, very trifling commands, and the record of very small matters. We have also in the same Book, occasionally, the account of ludicrous exhibitions and occurrences, and sometimes the record of that which might in itself offend our taste, and produce within us feelings of disgust. And yet, who shall say that these things are not indispensable to a faithful revelation? Little things are often great in their relations, and become momentous in their

bearings and consequences. The most trifling event may decide the fate of armies and empires.* The eating or the falling of an apple may affect a world! It is the thousandth dust, and not the thousand, that turns the scale. Motes show the way of the wind or the current better than vast navies. Nothing is small that affects human character or destiny. Trifles are often better indexes of character and tests of principle than mighty achievements, or vast revolutions. It is, therefore, no disparagement to Him who has *made* the minute and unseemly together with the vast and sublime, to let his *word* correspond with his works in this respect. A revelation, made up of superlatives and extravagant exhibitions and recitals, would want that artlessness and simplicity that are the secret of power. A volume of unvaried beauties, and filled with the record of vast events, would soon lose its hold upon our interests. It would be so unlike the book

* See Appendix

of nature, and so unfitted to the human mind, that it would fail to command our reverence and control our life.

4. "There are mysteries in the Bible, hard sayings, and records of comparatively conflicting import." But it does not become one who has never carefully studied the Scriptures, nor compared them with other systems of truth, to affirm this. But we are willing to entertain this objection in a qualified form. We admit that *appearances* are often as here affirmed. But we would say in explanation, that the Bible, much of it, was written very early in the history of the world, at periods when philosophy and science were in their infancy. It therefore must use the popular language of its age. Its great truths would have to be set forth in the light that then shone. Its writers would naturally refer to the views of science and philosophy that were then in vogue, and deal in figures and forms of illustration best understood in those ages. If the truths of Scripture had been put forth in the drapery of modern science, into

the learned language of recent philosophy, they would not have been truth! They would have been *enigmas*, blank mysteries to those who lived in those early times. A revelation that should anticipate the developments of future science, and adopt language and formulas of truth that could not possibly be deciphered till long ages after, when the light of learning should break upon the world, would fall dead to the ground. The people to whom such communications should be made, would turn away from them with disgust or despair. Such a book, if received at all, would have misled the nations and confounded the world, till the periods arrived, when systems of science and philosophy were actually discovered. But, as it is, the light of science, and the researches of philosophy, all combine to throw light upon the language and symbols of Scripture. Discovery in the great world of knowledge must throw light upon the work of biblical interpretation. Astronomy gives us the true sense of the passage that speaks of the

sun standing still in Gibeon, and the moon over Ajalon. Geology aids us in the interpretation of passages that refer to the creation and structure of the Globe. The Bible, indeed, uses language that was exactly conformed to *appearances* in nature, and to the then current opinions in philosophy. The expressions of its writers were a faithful transcript of the opinions and the state of civilization in their age. But the language of Scripture has a flexibility and a free and easy adaptation to scientific discovery when made, such as clearly indicates the high source and wisdom from which it came. False revelations have stultified themselves by attempting to *forestall* or establish science. They have proved their folly by taking ground totally at variance with the great truths of nature. They have had, in their positions, to contend with the demonstrations of rigid science. But not so the Sacred Scriptures. Their phraseology is adapted to ages of ignorance, and also of developement. They are adapted to all times and nations of

men. Its light shines in mid-darkness, no less than at noon-day. This simple volume is the glory of all literature, and yet the teacher of ignorance and of childhood. It thus demonstrates its superior wisdom, origin and end.

And with regard to mysteries, I would remark that the Bible is addressed to the *moral* as well as the *intellectual* nature of man. Its design is, to promote *faith* as well as knowledge, and to cultivate the salutary *fears* no less than spiritual feelings. Hence it is given to us in a garb that does not wholly exclude doubt, nor absolutely compel conviction. In a state of probation we need the doubtful as well as the definite, the difficult no less than the plain and the clear. Revelation is given us, partly to prove us, to discipline our moral nature, and to impart to the principle of faith or trust, its fullest developement. Hence we need the obscure mingled with the serene. Faith rises to exalted heights through her misty pathway, while thought demands an unobstructed track of vision. If all was

plain, where were the *proving*? The kind of faith that stands on demonstration can have no relationship nor affinity to the moral affections.

God has, therefore, left us to make our way through these mazes of opinion, these wilds of error and temptation, with a guide that does not force our steps. The light that he holds forth does not necessarily constrain our vision. Our eyes we may close. Our spiritual sense we may pervert, so that right shall seem wrong, and wrong right, and truth seem to us as error, and error to be truth. The God of this world hath blinded the mind of multitudes. Our sun is often veiled by clouds, or its beams bent by the cold atmosphere.

God has designed that man should believe and bow before him with submission and reverence; and his word is adapted to cultivate these sentiments. All his great arrangements and revelations are calculated to cultivate a spirit of faith, and an intelligent but trembling obedience. By growing downward in humility and submis-

sion, we gain higher views of God. As we descend low into the earth, we may look up through its distant surface into the heavens, and see there, even at noonday, stars and systems which are invisible to those who move on the surface, and in the dazzle of day. So in moral things, the deeper we sink in humility, the higher and clearer we see. The more profound our trust, the more glorious the light in which we walk. Whatever promotes true submission, whether it be trials, hardships, or revealed mysteries, tends to further the great ends of revelation, and to help us upward in our heavenly course.

CHAPTER XI.

The way a new science or art is tested—The Scriptures put to the test of experiment—A glance at their nature and structure—Compared with other authors—Opinion of a learned civilian—What they have done, their fruits—The experiment of several suns—The witnesses—General effects—The monument—The Bible, a source of national security and prosperity—The magician—Dr. Young—The Jews' famed oracle—The Bible in various circumstances.

THE author of a new discovery or science has recourse usually to experiment; the introducer of a new art or remedy, does the same thing. And if the proposed science or improvement stands this test, it gains ready access to public confidence. The Scriptures ask to be subjected to the same test of proof or experiment. It is but fair, that they be tried and judged by what they are, and what they have done; by the nature of their truths and the Divine elements of their doctrines; the sublimity of their revelations, and the excellence of

their code of laws and morals. It is proper, also, to take into view the character of their advocates and of their enemies. We are bound, likewise, to look upon this volume in the light of its results—the moral influence of its truths and precepts. We are to consider, moreover, the adaptation of these writings to the wants and miseries of the world.* Some of these points have been slightly anticipated, as essential to the discussion that has preceded. But we would now call particular attention to the form of proof now proposed. That which answers all the ends and purposes proposed in its constitution, is commonly considered to be genuine, or what it claims to be. We prefer to put the Scriptures upon their own proposed test. They are to be known by their fruits. In the judgment that we form of them, we are to consider not only the grandeur of the scheme or outline of revelation, the sublimity and variety of its doctrines and precepts, but we are to follow down its

* See Appendix.

track; we are to survey the moral changes it has produced in the world. We must contrast its system of religion with false systems, and compare its broad fields and blooming vales, through which the rivers of the water of life have run, with the sterile tracks and blasted regions of barbarism and false religion.

I would then ask, what uninspired authors have ever equalled the sacred writers, in the sublimity of their themes or the style of their composition? Who have ever argued and reasoned as these writers have done? Who have ever touched depths of thought so profound, or reached heights of conception so grand? Who have ever equalled them in comparison, illustration, and moral painting? * What historians, like these, have undertaken to combine in their works the whole field of the past and the future? What authors have penetrated to such depths of the Divine character, or pencilled such life-like delineations of human character, as those writers have done?

* See Appendix.

or touched so deeply and finely as many chords of human experience and sympathy as they? What writers have left on record doctrines so *Divine*, so pure; and a philosophy so true to man in all its elements, as the Scripture writers have done? What human authors have set forth laws and counsels, and principles of action, and motives to obedience, of such authority and weight as those on record in the Bible? In a word, the celestial ideas contained in our Scriptures, the suggestive nature and beauty of their symbols, their simplicity of style and force of thought, together with their sanctions of appeals and penalties, prove them to be a production of the Infinite Mind. Lycurgus, Plato, and Seneca dwindle into insignificance by the side of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul. Nor could the inspiration of the immortal poets of ancient times and literature be compared, for grandeur of conception and life-like illustration, with the book of Job, the Psalms of David, and the poetry of the prophets.

The most learned of modern civilians and divines, who had mastered the treas-

ures of nearly thirty different languages, expresses the opinion that the sacred writings possess even a *literary* excellence that surpasses the collected treasures of all other books of his acquaintance. But to this tribute of praise to their literary merits, is to be added the divinity of their truths, the weight of their precepts, and the splendor of their sanctions. It would give us pleasure to illustrate these views by various citations from the different books of Scripture, but our aim at brevity forbids this. In subjecting these writings to the test of experiment, it is proper that we put them to the proof of faithful analysis; that we examine the elements and genius of their composition, the taste and truthfulness of their style, together with the correctness of their historic and prophetic delineations. And so far as we have failed to sustain our assumptions in their favor by candid argument and a careful reference to facts, we would fearlessly invite investigation to all the points and propositions that are here presented, but left without a full illustration.

I would now call attention to what this book has done. What are its moral achievements? What changes has it wrought in the states of society and characters of men? It proposes to the continents a perfect civilization, and through direct or traditionary light, has established upon earth social and humane institutions. It has developed to the world a beneficent system of religion, a system that has within it the elements of a consistent salvation, the germs of every moral and educational improvement, the spirit of every humane and benevolent deed. The religion revealed in this book is the spring of every permanent improvement, the spirit of every healthful reform and revival of holiness. This book, therefore, becomes the pillar of the pulpit, the sceptre of government, the sanction of authority. It is the balm of the world. It heals its moral distempers, promotes the growth of virtue, and sustains the cause of learning and good laws. It is the stability of all times and things. We look at this word in its literary aspects and moral excellence, and find it unrivalled

in the great libraries of the world. It fears not to shine in the centre of all other lights and books. It stands there, and shines as the sun amidst the myriad lights of heaven. God has indeed magnified his word above all his name.

Now, suppose there were in space several suns, and that each of these suns was destined to make a revolution, or to shine its day, to prove whether it was the true sun or not. The sublime experiment, we suppose, commences. One of these suns rises and revolves; but it makes no impression upon the darkness. Its rising produces no day, its noon no warmth, its setting no shade. Another of these suns revolves; but its light is only a lurid glare, which serves to make the darkness visible. Another sun passes round our sphere. But it sends a blight over nature, the fields are struck with disease and decay, and death covers all its track. There is yet another luminary to revolve. It is the last one. The sublime experiment is to be made once more. This last sun rises. In a moment

a change appears. Creation smiles; death starts up into life, decay into beauty, and the face of nature is all bright and lovely. The earth, the sea, the sky, and the countenance of every living thing rejoices. Is not this the true sun? Was it not made to shine, its beams to bless and beautify all things?

Such is the Bible when compared with false revelations. These have all shone their day, but they have been to the world what those false suns were. Their light has been darkness, their influence everywhere disastrous. The Bible is shining *its* day, also, and it is a day that has no night, nor noon, but it opens to the world an ever-rising, expanding, glorious morning. Under its rays beauty and perfection abide. A perpetual spring, and ever blooming fields, and ripening harvests encircle the world. Blot out this book, and you extinguish the morning sun; you quench the brightest hope of earth. Civil and social order would cease, marriage vows and tenderest ties would be sundered, governments

would fall, and every green thing fade. These have their foundation in the Bible, and whoever, whatever, assumes to set its authority aside, helps to hasten all this ruin. Without this greater light of the world, reason wanders; the loftiest flights of philosophy and speculation are but a beating of the air; nature's lights are darkened, and the hope of immortality sets.

We are now prepared to ask, Who are the friends, and who the enemies, of this book? Who are they that read it, and praise it? I answer, the pure, the peaceable, the humble and holy; those who have tasted its excellence, and tested its worth. And are we not to take the testimony of an eye witness, that has knowledge and experience of what he affirms, rather than the assertion of one who speaks from prejudice or spite? But let the friends and the enemies of the Bible now be successively summoned to give an impartial testimony and verdict in this case. On the one hand we have the wise, the just, the pure. Those who pray most, and live best; and have

proved the excellence of the Bible in their own experience and lives. There they are, look at them; listen to them. Notice their godly sincerity! mark the unanimity and emphasis with which they testify in the case! They speak of this book as excellent in its truths and consolations. They speak of it as wise in its counsels, and precious in its precepts. They say it is good always, and every where, and in all things.

Turn now to the opposite witnesses, who testify as to what they do not know, and as to that which they have not proved. They will speak from prejudice rather than experience. Look at them! There sits the scorner, the scoffer. There is the man of impure lips and life. There is the profane person, the debauchee; the frequenter of bar rooms and bad houses. Notice the bloated face, the red eye, the curled lip, the lowering look, the skin spotted with disease, and the hands fresh from violence. Speak to them concerning religion and the Bible; their great truths, and sublime sanctions, and they answer you with an oath or

a sneer! They hate the doctrines and the duties revealed in this book. But is not that ordinarily true and good, which the ungodly are prone to despise, but which the righteous revere and love?

But I suppose in fairness we ought to introduce another class of witnesses. The *speculative schools* claim to be interrogated upon this subject. Their disciples are accustomed to look upon the Scriptures through the mediums of human learning and philosophy merely. They are fond of subjecting the Scriptures to scientific and philosophical tests, discarding the spirit of inspiration in which they were written; and deplorably destitute of sympathy with the essential spirit of the Bible themselves, they fail to see the grand system contained in it, and to combine its gems of truth into a coronet of symmetry and beauty. They look for learning and exact demonstration on these pages, but fail to find them there. They bring to the investigation of the Scriptures, the lights of unsanctified reason and learning; they

instal the frail intellect as a kind of Deity over the whole domain of truth. They subject the work of inspiration, as well as human science, to the tests of simple intellect and nice analysis. The pride of learning takes the place of prayer; and flights of adventurous speculation, of humbleness of mind, and the teachings of the Spirit.*

But what need have we of further witnesses? Can the Bible fear to commit its cause to a candid world, after careful experiments and candid examination, upon testimony so widely different, so conflicting and contradictory, and from sources so opposite? The Bible rests safely and proudly upon these tests. Men and principles are known by their fruits not only, but by their advocates and enemies. A book is also to be judged of by the character of its readers and admirers; laws by the character of their advocates; and speakers, of the audiences they draw. A book which

* See Appendix.

has uniformly gained to its friendship the pure and the good, but repelled the proud and the vile, has certainly one strong and deep mark of genuine excellence.

In fine, the truths of Scripture, like the words of prophecy over the valley of bones, awaken a literal resurrection. They stimulate reason and education; they become the guide of conscience and of human responsibility. Not even the sun, as he returns from his southern solstice to revisit these icy months and wastes, has ever wrought tupon lake or land, a change that can be compared with the moral renovation which the Word of God awakens throughout the world. The sun, indeed, as he comes from his pilgrimage amongst luxuriant isles and zones to dissolve the marble waters and open the bosom of frozen nature, turning the storm into sunshine, and barren fields into a blooming paradise, puts upon the face of all things a fresh life. But when the directer rays come from the upper glory, through the medium of revelation, the moral fields are changed,

and all things become new. Savage wildness is turned into Christian gentleness; superstition and ignorance are exchanged for knowledge and culture; order and beneficence take the place of anarchy, fierceness and blood; the various vices are forced to flee; the midnight of error and ignorance breaks into morning; iron hearts melt, and the firmest wills bend to the sovereignty of truth.

And what memorial ought the world to raise to the honor of the Bible? If man should deign to build a monument worthy to express his gratitude for the Scriptures and to perpetuate the memory of the blessed institutions we have received from God, that monument should be built of Bibles. The proud monument at the Capital of our nation is to be built of stones contributed by the States and different institutions that feel interested to add to the column that shall perpetuate the memory of the Father of our Country. This is done in honor of the great founder of our government and civil institutions.

So in this monument of a better commemoration, the family should make its contribution; the school and the college should present an offering; the hospital, the asylum, the humane institution, should forward their gifts; commerce, agriculture, and the arts should contribute largely to the work; philosophy, civilization and government should add their free and rich testimonials to the value of the Bible: for upon it these all rest. They have no protection nor permanency without the Bible. Every department of enterprise, every interest of earth should volunteer in this work, and hasten to send their memorials to this greatest monument of earth. But Christianity would have to claim the privilege of laying the foundation and placing upon it the top-stone of this mountain of memorials. For, after all that has been claimed for the sovereignty of absolute truth, discovered by the inner consciousness and controlling the faith and affections, *independent* of a recorded and attested revelation, it is the experience of the world,

that all such systems are but shadows. We must stand after all on the *terra firma* of revealed truth.

And as a matter of security and defence to a nation, the Bible is better than navies or armies. If we would protect our cities, let us raise forts and build breast-works; but what is better than forts and breast-works is the Bible! If we would secure our coasts, our trade, our merchandize, from danger, it is well to line our shores with buoys, beacons, and light-houses. But while we provide those that *may* mislead or be swept away, let us not fail to provide others, whose light never deludes nor wavers — those that shall never cease to mark the rocks and shoals of danger, and all the perils of life's great sea.

The elements of our past and future prosperity are contained in this book. It fears no harder battles than it has already fought, nor deadlier foes than it has already encountered and conquered. No winds, nor storms, nor waves can rise higher, or beat heavier than those that have hitherto

•

assailed this blessed volume. Philosophy has aimed its sharpest arrows at this book, but they have recoiled with deadly effect upon the assailants. No weapon formed or hurled against it shall prosper. The gates of Hell will prove powerless here. Whoever leans upon the promises of this Word, is upborne as upon angels' wings. Such shall see the world far beneath them. *Upward* to them shall be a *descent*. Their attraction will be toward the skies. They can never fall, while the throne in Heaven stands.

In point of sublime results, therefore, the Bible stands the test of experiment. It holds the relation to other books that the full-orbed sun held to the earliest light of creation, or which that sun now holds to the lesser lights of heaven. There was light before the glorious sun was revealed in heaven to rule the day. But the earth did not appear in its green landscapes and natural glories, till the sun stood forth definitely and glorious in the skies. This book contains the germs of all essential

truth, the ample elements of moral beauty and progress.

A magician was once asked the secret of his power. He held forth a glittering cap, and said, "By this I divine." Ask him who has influence with God and power over the wills and destinies of men, for the secret of his charm, and he will point you to the beaming pages of the Bible.

Doctor Young speaks of the Jews' famed oracle of gems that sparkled instruction. The oracles of God are, indeed, the only ones of which this can be truly said. It is their glory that at every point they beam forth knowledge and wisdom—that from every page they "*sparkle instruction*."

The Jews were taught to bind the words of their law for a sign upon their heads, and as frontlets between their eyes. The ancient Greeks, we are told, wrote their *inspired sentence* in all conspicuous places. But how much more should we make of the lively oracles of God, the full-orbed glory of an entire Revelation! How ought we to bind these blessed truths around our

very hearts, and seek to unfold them to the view and faith of man! What we prize we should impart. Giving is never followed by a diminished possession. God, like the sun, forever imparts without the least exhaustion. What has given us light and joy, we should hold forth to the world. This volume is the greatest gift of God to man. It is worth more than lands or laws, than merchandize or much fine gold. It is older than tradition, wiser than the schools, truer than philosophy, safer than the creeds,* and more powerful than armies.

This Word has been proved. It affords a relief to the suffering, a sure specific for every sorrow and woe. For every moral disease it has a balm. Life has no anguish which it does not soothe, nor billow which it cannot calm. It nourishes every virtue, quiets every fear. It quells human passion, banishes every danger, blesses every virtue, quickens every grace. Its truths are the great antidote to the evils and vices of earth. By taking heed to their ways

* See Appendix.

according to this word, both the young and the old may cleanse their hearts. This book is the believer's breastplate, his crowded armory. It supports him in the world's great conflicts and in the deep dark floods, where every billow flows over him. It carries him through the last peril of life, and through the deep valley of death. Its lamp guides the wayfaring to a peaceful home, and leads the voyager upon life's stormy waves, through treacherous straits into a serene haven. It restrains the follies of youth, and lightens the burdens of age, and through the dark wilderness and perils of life, it guides where no ray of reason or experience shines. What single necessity of our nature doth not this volume meet! It disperses all clouds of gloom, and lays harmless at our feet every arrow of temptation and danger. It doubles our joys in prosperity, and takes from adversity its sharpest sting. It speaks in tones of terror to the wicked, but is full of encouragement and comfort to the righteous. It is not, however, till we pass through the furnace, the flame, that the

balm of Bible consolation is most precious to us. So often has this blessed Word carried us through afflictions and floods, that our very last doubt as to its Divine origin and inspiration ought to be for ever dispelled.* Can we question longer that which stands the test and trial of our every experience? If we would enjoy peace of conscience in present responsibilities, and gain a victory over the grave, let us bind this book of books to our strongest faith and warmest affections. What but this can carry us safe over life's perilous sea, and give us hope amid the glooms of the grave?

But we are not done with this book, even at death. Our interest in the Bible will even outlive the grave. This sun will shine yet another day. By its light the deeds of earth will at last be judged. Nor is this the end. The word of the Lord endureth for ever; its truths will be a source of delight and blessedness in Heaven.

See Appendix.



A P P E N D I X.

See page 15.

THERE can be no compromise in this question. The authority of the Bible must be admitted as supreme and final, or fall to a level with human standards. But the difference in point of authority between a revelation from the Infinite Mind, and the efforts of the highest human wisdom and genius, is scarcely less than infinite! Let a book claiming to be a revelation from God, be forced to yield that claim, and fall upon even the highest summit of human authority, and its claims are no longer Divine; its authority ceases to be binding.

It is as if the Godhead were degraded a degree from infinite supremacy ; but that degree becomes infinite in extent, for the difference between the loftiest finite excellence and the infinite in standard and perfection, is one of infinite extent. To lower the Bible at all, therefore, from its fixed standard of infallible authority, is to put it on a level with the productions of finite intellect.

To the question as to the entire authority of this work, we cannot rest satisfied with an equivocal answer: A book clothed with Divine sanctions is not to be partly received and partly rejected, to be believed here and denied there ; for who, in that case, would undertake to discriminate between the teachings of God and the teachings of men ? Who would dare to say, this is the voice of God, that the voice of man ! this is light from heaven, those are rays from earth ! here is infallible truth, there pernicious error ! To treat the Bible in this way, were to suppose a tribunal above it, a standard of truth or taste in human

reason or genius, to which its truths were to be subjected.

But did God intend that the human faculties should become standards in the moral sphere? Did he mean that they should become suns — or *stars* simply? the greater or the lesser lights of the world? Is the light of revelation to be a true, or an *apparent* sun? Shall the Scriptures, or shall science and the speculative faculties be looked upon as the twinkling lights of heaven? This is the great question of the age, and so long as it remains unanswered, nothing can be considered as fixed that relates to the moral destiny of man.

Let me add here, that when confidence in the existence of a personal God, or a written revelation, is shaken, there is no resting-place for the human mind. Speculation, like the dove of old, may gather green leaves and pleasant branches from nature and science, but finding no solid resting-place, the human mind must return to the ark of rest, in the lively oracles. Once unsettled, the spirit of man vacillates

and wavers from point to point. When the supreme and the perfect are abandoned, it is most difficult to adopt a substitute, or decide upon a standard. The reason vibrates from strongholds, to regions of doubt, passes from the highest summits on earth to its deepest, darkest recesses, sinks from the zenith of trust to the opposite extreme of despair. To doubt the perfections of a personal God is a start towards atheism and idolatry; and to question the full authority of a revelation accompanied with the full sanctions of Heaven, is a step which may lead to downright infidelity. Great is the fall from full confidence in the perfect, to the waverings of doubt and uncertainty.

See page 43.

I use the term *ordinarily* here, because it may be fairly doubted whether the gift of foreseeing future events is susceptible of being made a matter of *natural* endowment. The gift of memory has to do with the

past, or the *facts* of the past. It will not be pretended that the memory could take hold of ideal occurrences or facts of the past, that are such only as they lie among the *possibilities* of the past, or the events that have never been communicated to the mind. To impart such a gift to man, the Creator would have to impart one of his own attributes — that of immediate omniscience, which from the nature of the case is supposed to be an impossibility. Divine perfections are self-existent, are *necessary*, and hence can neither be created or communicated.

If this be true with respect to memory,—if the mind must have a medium or data in order to recollection, so it must have fixed facts or visible events for the faculty of *prescience*, or forecast, to rest upon. It then follows, that whatever of the future depends upon the Divine purpose or foreknowledge for its existence, but has not yet passed into reality, or fact, could not be discovered, if we conjecture aright, by any possible natural capacity of man. Hence

I avoid the term *natural*, as applying to the supposed gift in question.

See page 44.

I adopt the prevailing impression here. I find that some of the ablest commentators regard this curse as referring constructively to Ham, though literally pronounced upon Canaan. It is regarded as an elliptical expression, pointing the curse designed for the descendants of Ham, to a particular branch of his family, which may have been most specially obnoxious to the Divine displeasure! I am inclined to this view of the subject, for these reasons:

1. The phrase servant of servants seems to have a very peculiar application to the people of Central Africa, the great mass of whom are brutally enslaved to degraded heathen masters. Now these races are supposed to be descended from Ham, not in the line of Canaan, but through other branches of the family. These unhappy

racés more fully verify the specification of the curse, than, perhaps, any others upon earth.

2. The literal descendants of Canaan seem never to have been enslaved to the sons of Japhet, but the text affirms that both Japhet and Shem shall be instruments in executing the curse upon the sons of Canaan or Ham. The *plural*, and not the singular, is used. Canaan and his seed were the original inhabitants of Palestine, who were expelled or destroyed by the Jews, the sons of Shem. Japhet and his descendants seem to have had no hand in executing the curse upon Canaan, literally, but have struck hands with the sons of Shem in oppressing the descendants of Ham in other parts of the world. Now if the curse had been limited to Canaan, the text must have referred, in allusion to their subjection, to their *brother*, and not to their brethren. But as the reference is to both the brethren, we have no good reasons for limiting it to one. The oppression of Canaan did not exhaust the curse.

3. If the curse did not fall constructively, or elliptically, upon Ham, then, contrary to the usage of ancient times, he failed to receive prophetic words at all from his father's lips. Those good men, when about to leave the world, were accustomed to assemble their children around them, and pronounce upon them a prophetic farewell. So did the patriarchs; so did Noah, when about to die; and Shem and Japhet received these last words in the form of a blessing. Now if the curse in question did not fall properly on Ham, then, contrary to ancient custom, he was neither blest nor curst in the case.

But I have no motive for insisting on this interpretation, if fair criticism does not require it. If it has ever been adopted to justify the enslaving of men, the motive is a matter of lamentation. Can the *primal* curse that fell upon the race be referred to in justification of those cruelties and sins that have followed? Let us rather be stimulated to wise and earnest efforts in the behalf of those on whom the greater

curse or the lesser ones have fallen. God's justice and right cannot be questioned in these, and yet the cruelty, the wrong and ruin of man are fearfully revealed in the curses under which the earth groans.

.

See page 58.

And now, what shall we say to these things? The New Testament not only appeals to the Old by way of illustration, and for the sake of comparison, but everywhere appeals to it as the Word of God, as the testimony of his Holy Spirit, as the oracles of his prophets, as the rule of life, as the foundation of the spiritual building which Christ came to erect. Its predictions, its precepts, its narrations, are interwoven with every part of what apostles and evangelists have written. It is incorporated with the very material of religious thought, in the minds of all the New Testament writers. Even when they do not quote and do not seem, as the hasty reader might sup-

pose, at all to allude to the Old Testament, its ideas and its idioms are incorporated with all their productions. In the Apocalypse, John has not made one *formal* quotation of Scripture; yet no book of the New Testament, as has already been remarked, so abounds in and overflows with the spirit of the Old Testament, as this book. The writer had, if I may be allowed the expression, steeped himself in the ancient Scriptures, until he was thoroughly imbued with them: I know not how I can better express my views of the style of his production than in this way. And so it is, indeed, with all the evangelists, with Paul, with Peter, and with James. It is impossible to conceal this, or withdraw it from sight. It is in vain to deny it before any candid reader. The most sophisticated reasoning cannot even make out an ingenious case to the contrary.

What shall we say, then? What can we say less than what the Saviour himself said to the Jews? "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of

me. *But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words.*" — John 5: 46, 47.

Shall this book, then, be spurned away, and treated as a collection of fables, of barbarous maxims, and of trifling ritual ordinances? This is the question. It is this very question which lies between the declarations of the Saviour and his apostles on one hand, and the scepticism of so-called Rationalists on the other. Whom shall we believe? There is no compromise in this case. He that is not for Christ is assuredly against him. He who rejects his authority on this point, virtually rejects it on all others. Christ was either in the right or in the wrong, as the estimate which he put upon the Old Testament. It is impossible to doubt what that estimate was, after the evidence which has come before us. If he was in the right, then is the Old Testament a book of Divine authority — the ancient revelation of God. If he was in the wrong, then we can put no confidence in his teaching. He might be in the wrong with respect to every command and opinion

which he gave; and of consequence, the whole system of Christianity is nothing more than an airy figure moving in the *mirage*, or one which floats along upon the splendid mists which surround it.

If obedience and submission to the decisions of Christ and his apostles be an essential ingredient of Christianity, then is my conclusion inevitable, in case I have duly shown that Christ and his apostles did receive the Old Testament Scriptures as Divine and authoritative. If this be not fully shown, then must I despair of ever seeing any point established in sacred criticism, either in respect to facts or opinions. There is not a circumstance in all the history of true religion, appertaining to ancient times, that is capable of more absolute demonstration than this.—*Prof. Stuart.*

See page 73.

Addison, after speaking of the multiplicity of God's works and cares, says,

(Spectator, No. 565,) I could not but look upon myself with secret horror, as a being that was not worth the smallest regard of One who had so great a work under his care and superintendence. I was afraid of being overlooked amidst the immensity of nature, and lost among that infinite variety of creatures, which, in all probability, swarm through all these immeasurable regions of matter.

In order to recover myself from this mortifying thought, I considered that it took its rise from those narrow conceptions which we are apt to entertain of the Divine nature. * * * It would be an imperfection in him, (God,) were he able to move out of one place into another, or to withdraw himself from any thing he has created, or from any part of that space which is diffused and spread abroad to infinity. In short, to speak of him in the language of the old philosopher, he is a Being, whose centre is everywhere, and his circumference nowhere."

See pages 102 and 104.

The greatest events which the world has witnessed, have resulted from a combination of concurrent causes, each of which might seem altogether unimportant in itself.

Take the subject, to illustrate which the apostle uttered the text. The tongue is a little member ; yet it may prove "a world of iniquity, and set on fire the course of nature." We need not draw examples from the monstrous folly of duellists, when so many examples are to be found among rational, sober men, and even in the Christian church. That little member speaks a word. A partial alienation betwixt two friends commences; by the whispering of other tongues, increases; becomes coldness, then jealousy, then enmity. Their own passions, the partialities of friends, the officiousness of talebearers, act with combined and mischievous effect, till a trivial misunderstanding, which might have been amicably adjusted in one minute, becomes an incurable and ruinous contro-

versy. Suppose the parties to be pastors in the church; suppose them to be prime ministers of a nation; and see how the consequences rise into incalculable importance.

To change the figure, and adopt that of Solomon, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth forth water." The breach in a dam, which might have been covered with a man's hand, was neglected, and occasioned a deluge. A fly, or an atom, may set in motion a train of intermediate causes, which shall produce a revolution in a kingdom. Any one of a thousand incidents might have cut off Alexander of Greece in his cradle. But if Alexander had died in infancy, or had lived a single day longer than he did, it might have put another face on all the following history of the world.

A spectacle-maker's boy, amusing himself in his father's shop, by holding two glasses between his finger and thumb, and varying their distance, perceived the weather-cock of the church spire, opposite to him, much

larger than ordinary, and apparently much nearer, and turned upside down. This excited the wonder of the father, and led him to additional experiments; and these resulted in that astonishing instrument, the *telescope*, as invented by Galileo, and perfected by Herschell.

It is a fact commonly known, that the *laws of gravitation* which guide the thousands of rolling worlds in the planetary system, were suggested at first to the mind of Newton by the *falling of an apple*.

The *art of printing* shows from what casual incidents the most magnificent events in the scheme of Providence may result. Time was when princes were scarcely rich enough to purchase a copy of the Bible. Now, every cottage in Christendom is rich enough to possess this treasure. "Who would have thought that the simple circumstance of a man amusing himself by cutting a few letters on the bark of a tree, and impressing them on paper, was intimately connected with the mental illumination of the world?"

Great effects may result from little causes.

Let us pursue the illustration of this truth, as furnished by facts in sacred history.

“The woman took of the fruit and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” In itself, how small was this action; but it ruined a *world*! *One* hand did the deed, in *one moment*! but *hundreds of millions* have been involved in the consequences, through *sixty centuries*!

A spark of envy in the bosoms of Joseph's brethren, grew into settled enmity, and led them to aim at the destruction of his life. Here commenced a series of events, which occasioned the removal of Jacob's family to Egypt, and which gave completion to the affairs of two nations through all subsequent periods.

The seed of Jacob, who came down to Egypt, were only seventy persons. During their residence in that land, they multiplied to six hundred thousand fighting men. The king of the country, alarmed at this increase, issued a barbarous edict, that every

Hebrew male child should be destroyed at its birth. To avoid the execution of this decree, a Hebrew mother, having concealed her little son for three months, resolved to commit the babe to the mercy of Providence, with no protection from the elements and the monsters of the Nile but an ark of bulrushes. Soon, a stranger passed by that way, just at the moment that the babe wept. That stranger was a woman, whose heart could feel for a poor, forsaken infant; a princess too, the only person in Egypt who might safely indulge this tenderness. The child was saved, and adopted as the son of the king's daughter. Little did that princess know what she was doing. That weeping infant, thus rescued from death, was to be the minister of Divine vengeance to the kingdom of her haughty father; was to be the amanuensis of the Holy Ghost; was to write five books of the sacred canon, containing the only authentic history of the creation and first ages of the world; was to become a distinguished legislator, deliverer and guide, to the church of God.

Joshua's victorious march into Canaan was suddenly arrested. His army were compelled to fly before their enemies: all was consternation and distress. What was the matter? A single man, out of the twelve tribes, had embezzled three articles from the spoils of Jericho, contrary to Divine command. Achan committed trespass in this thing, "and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel."

Restrained by the energy of Joshua's authority and example, Israel prospered; but his death was followed by a rapid decline of piety and morals. In this period of licentiousness, Micah stole from his mother eleven hundred pieces of silver. By a process, which exhibits one of the strangest traits in the human character, namely, the connection betwixt depravity and superstition, Micah came to the resolution to appease his conscience, by making this stolen silver into a god. A vagrant Levite, from Bethlehem Judah, became his priest. From this small beginning, idolatry spread like a leprosy through the nation.

The fear of God was extinguished; and such profligacy of manners ensued, even in the beloved tribe of Benjamin, that a peaceable stranger could not lodge among them one night in safety. One of the most dire calamities which flowed from these impieties, was civil war. Brother was armed against brother; and in three desperate battles, sixty-five thousand men were slain. "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

The sons of Eli made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. This negligence in the judge and the priest of Israel, proved a source of the deepest anguish to himself and his country. These lawless sons, having access to the sacred utensils of the tabernacle, carried away the Ark of the covenant into the camp, to ensure victory over the Philistines. God was angry; Israel was smitten with a terrible slaughter, and the Ark was taken. In the mean time Eli heard what his sons had done. His heart trembled. Blind with age, and bending under the decrepitude of ninety-

eight years, he tottered away to the gate of the city, and sat down there, that he might catch the first rumor from the army. O, should the ark be taken, the glory of Israel would be gone! With what profane triumph would it be told in Gath, and published in the streets of Askelon. Presently a tumult is heard — a messenger comes from the army — where is Eli? — “What meaneth the noise of this tumult,” said the poor old man to the messenger panting for breath, “what is there done, my son?” — “*Israel is fled before the Philistines; there hath been a great slaughter among the people; thy two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead; and the ARK OF GOD IS TAKEN.*” Eli heard all with composure, till the dreadful event was announced, “The Ark of God is taken;” that was too much; his heart sunk, he fainted, fell backward, and died. From that day, the ruin of Shiloh was dated. From that fatal day, their candlestick was removed out of its place, and their city dwindled to nothing.

In the sequel of the Jewish history, we

read that Goliath of Gath came forth, day after day, and, with an attitude of daring impiety, challenged the Hebrews and their God. The men of war were struck with dismay, and the captains of Israel, with trembling hearts and at a cautious distance, looked at the mighty man. At length, a stripling shepherd, the son of Jesse, unfit, as was supposed, for the fatigues of war, was sent to the camp on a common errand, to carry provisions and enquire for the welfare of his brethren. By permission of the king, he entered the lists to fight with Goliath. Clad in no armor but faith in the Lord of hosts, and using no weapons but a sling and a stone, the giant fell before him. Thus a common stone, which had lain perhaps useless and unnoticed for ages in the bottom of a common brook, slew the champion and routed the army of the Phillistines, and decided a battle on which the interests of a nation were suspended.

Great effects may result from little causes.—
Porter.

See page 112.

“There is a peculiar fitness in the Bible as a place of meeting between God’s Spirit and man’s spirit. It is the very place through which a conveyance from the one descends upon the other. There is no other inspiration to be expected now-a-days, than simply the word of God being made clear and impressive to us. When the Holy Ghost speaks to us, He makes use of no other vocables than the words of Scripture. When He illuminates the soul, it is by a lustre reflected upon it from the pages of Scripture. When He bears upon the conscience, it is with the urgency of some truth, or some moral lesson, the whole letter and expression of which is to be found in the Scripture. He does not operate on the mind of man, but by putting himself into contact with the Scripture. And man ought not to look for this operation but by just, on the other hand, bringing himself into contact with this said Scripture. The Bible is the place of con-

course between the celestial influence from above, and the terrestrial subject that is below; the common ground on which the two parties hold their conference, the one with the other, and where the earnestness of man meets with the visitation of that God, who rewards them who seek him diligently. It is here, if any where, that if we draw near unto God, he will draw near unto us."

See page 113.

THE TROPICAL LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE.

Tropical language is the language of allusion, metaphor, and simile. It gives to natural objects and events a speech or voice to illustrate truth. There are no writings so richly stored with figurative representations as those of Revelation. The sacred penmen spake in the touching narrative not only, but in the beautiful figure, the startling symbol, the expressive parable. They wrought every scene and

change in the natural world, into their life-like delineations.

There is a necessity for this form of language in the Bible.

1. There is *in the human soul, a taste* for illustrative teaching. There is something in the human mind that aspires to the language of nature. We love to have truth illustrated by what we *see*, and *hear*, and *feel*. Thus enlivened and beautified, it addresses the intellect through the senses, the fancy, and feelings. It is then that the whole harp of the soul responds — feels the pervading influence of the thought; and the impression makes itself deep and lasting there.

2. There is a necessity for this kind of language in Scripture, growing out of the *poverty of common language*. Language originally had but few terms; and as the mirror of the mind, it represented the comparative paucity of ideas in the earliest ages. But it is during this period, that a revelation of the Divine will is to be commenced. The world's history is to be

written — its melancholy past, its shaded future, shrouded deep in the obscurities of prophecy and in adumbrations of mystery, such as necessarily pertains to the future; with whatever relates to God and eternity. This communication is to be made to man in every age and clime, and through the medium of poor, meagre human language! Hence the necessity for the free use of figurative expressions. The material world is summoned to the work of expressing those sublime, inspired conceptions. All nature puts on the dress of ideas, and reflects upon the sacred page the pure radiance of Divine thought. Language, like some of the humbler forms of nature, touched by the breath of inspiration, thus came to assume, so to speak, celestial life and beauty.

3. The necessity for the tropical language of Scripture is seen in the *mutable nature* of literal language. Words and their signification fluctuate, and become an unsafe depository of immutable sentiments. Hence a language is sought that will not change.

Figures and symbols are borrowed from the changeless scenes and fixtures of nature, in which these great truths may be safely enshrined. They will thus, breathing in the air, speaking in the clouds and the heavens, smiling in the bow and in the stream, and shining in the stars and in the sun, give forth a free and definite light upon the changing periods and phases of earth. The need of figurative language, therefore, springs not only from the poverty of human language, as the fresh plant does from the decayed vegetable, and the sweet flower from the desert solitudes, but that necessity has its rise also in the fluctuating forms of human speech and its standard expressions.

4. There seems to be an *adaptation in natural objects* to the expression of spiritual truths. God seems to have instituted a sort of resemblance between visible and invisible things. In the fine analogies or parallels that seem to run through creation, shadowing forth correspondences or counterparts between sensible and spiritual

things, lies the foundation for the figurative and symbolical expressions of Scripture. So that the heavens shine, not only to shed natural light and beauty upon earth, but they are stretched forth, a mighty *canvass*, upon which the sublimest truths and ideas are sketched. The stream flows, not merely to refresh the land and supply the larger fountains, but it has higher relations, and purer reflections. It has a ministry to perform that effects man's spiritual nature. Its voice, its murmurs, die; but the mighty waters, to which each silver streamlet contributes, echo forth the grander truths of Jehovah. The gothic tree, that lifts its bowing branches from the earth—the pleasant bow, that forms the arching eyelids of heaven, and the myriad scenes, and forms, and voices of great nature, have each a higher aim than would at first appear. And he is happy who has an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to melt.

Nature had once been a medium of revelation to man. Its thousand forms and scenes have all been oracles of sacred

truth to the world! Nor did they, like the heathen oracles, close their lips when the light of revelation dawned upon them. No, they speak still. Nature has not changed, but man! The *elder Scripture* has withdrawn none of its light, has silenced none of its voices; but revelation, as another and brighter morning, has risen upon the previous twilight. The echo of God's greater voice, in Scripture, has drowned none of the lesser voices of nature. Thus, by associating spiritual truth with natural objects, its light beams forth afresh; its echos are prolonged, and startle the world. The spirit thus kindles anew the luminaries of moral vision, lights up truth that had faded from the canvass of nature, and gives an echo to voices that had long been unheard, or unheeded. The physical universe was made for mind. Its laws, its taste and beauties, are fitted to strengthen and adorn the imperishable faculties. Creation was adapted to the spiritual nature of that which was formed upon an uncreated model. It was adapted to develope

and expand the human powers, and to help prepare them for a purely spiritual existence. Then as the scaffolding is thrown aside, when the stately temple is finished, that its splendor and proportions might appear unobscured, so material nature, when its work is done, will pass away, and all will again be spiritual.

I remark once more, that in the use of figurative language in Revelation, Divine truth comes to be *largely associated with* the objects in nature, so that almost every object has a spiritual truth attached to it, and the presence of these objects naturally suggests to the mind the truths which they illustrate. Thus the sun suggests to the mind the Deity, who by metaphor is called a sun. The stars set before the imagination the saints, in their stations of glory. In this way, all nature comes to be häng over with truth. Every object becomes a spiritual teacher, pointing to the wisdom of Him who built the heavens and the earth.

See page 122.

GERMAN THEOLOGY.

Speaking of the better class of German theologians, Professor Stuart uses the following language:—" Could their position in regard to the Scriptures be received by the indiscriminating multitude of men, both learned and unlearned, without the most absolute hazard of all belief in the Bible as Divinely authoritative; of all belief in its doctrines, its precepts, and its facts? Impossible, altogether impossible. The ground once abandoned, which Paul has taken, that ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, every man of common attainments will feel at liberty to say whatever his own subjective feelings may dictate; to say: 'This is unimportant, that is unessential; this is a doubtful narration, that is a contradictory one; this is in opposition to science, and that to reason; this may be pruned, and that lopped off, while the tree may still remain as good as ever.' In a word, every one is left, wholly,

and without any check, to be his own judge in the case, how much of the Bible is consonant with his own reason and subjective feelings, and how much is not; and these feelings are of course the high court of appeal. What now has become of the book of God, true, authoritative, decisive of all duty and all matters of faith? Gone, absolutely gone, irretrievably gone, as to the mass of men who are not philosophers in casuistry and in the theory of religion. And if any doubt remains as to the effect of such doctrine, I appeal again to the religious state of the great German community — to their Sabbaths, to their lonely sanctuaries, to their lack of missionary spirit, and to their general indifference as to revivals of religion, such as produce and foster warm-hearted piety. The *Pietists*, (as in the way of scorn they name all warm-hearted and practical religious men,) are merely 'a smoke in the nostrils' of their scholars and their statesmen. No man can rebut the force of this appeal, for the truth of it is too palpable. The worst

of all is, that the mass of the Germans look with secret scorn on a man who claims that a practically godly, prayerful, humble life is essential to religion. One question sums up the account. Where is the *family altar* for prayer and praise in the German community? Even in the so-called *religious* community? If what I have often heard be true, such altars are not more numerous among them, than were the righteous, whom Abraham was requested to find in a devoted city of old. I do not say there can be no piety, where this is the case. There may be some sevens of thousands, I hope there are, who do not 'bow the knee to Baal;' and doubtless the Redeemer has sincere followers and friends there. But that active spirit of piety, which fills the church and the conference-room with humble and anxious enquirers after the way of salvation; which sanctifies the Sabbath; which builds up religious Schools; which sends the Gospel to the destitute in one's own country, and raises up missionaries and causes them to go forth unto the ends

of the earth, that 'the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God and live'—such a spirit cannot breathe strongly and freely, where there are no family altars, and no Sabbath.

"To the same position or state, or one much like it, must we also come ere long, unless this tide can be averted from us. But this must be done, if it can be accomplished. On the present generation in our country it rests, to decide the question whether we shall follow in the footsteps of Germany. The spirit of every Christian pastor in the land, and of every private Christian, too, ought to be roused up to meet this great exigency; and the churches should at once concert and adopt measures to establish such an Institution as has been described above, or something equivalent to it. NEW TIMES AND NEW DANGERS CALL FOR NEW AND ADEQUATE DEFENCES. We should train our own men; so that they may rush with skill and power into the thickest of the battle, as often as the portentous contest arises. Alas! How will

our churches rue the day, (when they have become prostrate in energy, and insignificant in numbers,) in which they have neglected to furnish a *corps of holy officers*, who are adequate to guide in every contest, and on every occasion." — *Bibliotheca Sacra*.

See page 129.

CREEDS.

Whoever believes the Bible, or rejects it, has formed an opinion as to what it teaches. No one can assent to the Bible till he has satisfied himself as to its instructions; and no one can consistently reject its teachings, till he has formed an opinion as to what they really are. To say that we receive the instructions of the Bible, and at the same time affirm that we are not decided as to what points are made clear upon its pages, is to convict ourselves of inconsistency or self-contradiction. And to declare that we do not have confidence in the sacred volume, when we have failed

to form an opinion as to what it teaches, is to charge ourselves with prejudice or falsehood. In its drapery of symbols or didactic terms, this Book unfolds distinct doctrines and principles. These are presented to our faith, or mental and spiritual assent. If we accept these points, we have what we may call a creed.

It matters nothing for us to say that the *Bible is our creed!* This is to confound things. How few there are who do not profess to accept the teachings of the Bible, in some form; and yet how widely do these Bible believers differ! To be fair and plain, we must go farther, and state *what* we regard the Bible as *teaching*, and as *denying*. This Book, addressed to our faith and spiritual nature, is susceptible of various interpretations; and hence the importance of *compend*s, or clearly expressed views of its teachings. Till this is done, in some form or other, how can the boundaries of truth and error be established; how the line between the calvinist and transcendentalist be traced? Till we narrow

ourselves down to particulars, or definite points, our assertion that we receive the Bible amounts to nothing. If a man says he believes the Bible, but declines to state what it is in the Bible that he believes, he must be supposed to be in confusion in his own mind, or to be wanting in the grace of Christian frankness.

Is it affirmed that creeds are not inspired, and that other ages may change them? It is answered, that their use does not lie on this ground: they are valuable as landmarks or tests, to which a general faith, a wavering confidence, or settled convictions, may be brought. Creeds, however, are not so much snares in which to catch heretics, as they are lines to bound heresy. They are the tests of Christian fellowship, rather than the stakes of Christian martyrdom. And still, when we hear persons speak reproachfully of them, we are prone to be a little suspicious, — either that they do not precisely understand their use, or themselves; or that they wish for a latitude of belief a little broader

than Revelation, or for the license of holding views somewhat laxer than its immutable doctrines.

See pages 46, 71.

CHANGES OF TIME.

In Asia Minor, we tread upon a soil rich in interesting and splendid recollections, with an existing population completely debased by ignorance and slavery. The glory of twenty different nations that once flourished here, has been extinguished; flocks wander over the tomb of Achilles and of Hector; and the thrones of Mithridates and the Antiochuses have disappeared, as well as the palaces of Priam and Croesus. The merchants of Smyrna do not enquire whether Homer was born within their walls; the fine sky of Ionia no longer inspires either painters or poets; the same obscurity covers with its shades the banks of the Jordan and the Euphrates. The republic of Moses is not to be found.

The harps of David and Isaiah are silent for ever; the wandering Arabian comes, indifferent and unmoved, to rest the poles of his tent against the shattered columns of Palmyra; Babylon has also fallen, beneath the stroke of an avenging destiny, and that city which reigned supreme over oppressed Asia, has scarcely left behind it a trace that can show where the ramparts of Semiramis were raised. "I have seen," says a traveller, "the accomplishment of that prophecy, 'Tyre, the queen of the nations, shall be made like the top of a rock, where the fishermen shall spread their nets.'" — *Malte Brun*.

See pages 72, 129.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BIBLE.

This book, a multifarious collection of oracles, written in various ages and countries, and at intervals of two thousand years, having in it every form of composition, familiar and profound, songs and

history, ethics and biography, scenes from the hearth, and episodes from national annals; numbering, too, among its authors, him who wore a crown and him who threw a net, the Persian prime minister and Cæsar's fettered captive; written, too, sections of it, under the shadow of the pyramids, and others on the banks of the Euphrates, some in the Isle of Patmos, and others in the Mamertine dungeons: this book, so lofty in its tone and harmonious in its counsels, has become the more venerable from its age, and the more wonderful as its history and results are examined and understood. Whence springs its originality, if its claims are disallowed? It tells us of expeditions prior to Jason and the Argonauts. It describes martial adventures long before Achilles and Troy. Its ethical system preceded Thales and Pythagoras. Its muse was vocal before Orpheus and Hesiod. Its judges flourished before consuls and archons. Its feasts and gatherings rejoiced the tribes, when the Nemean games had no existence; and it

reckoned by Sabbaths and jubilees when neither Olympiad nor lustrum marked and divided the calendar. It embodies the prophetic wish of the Athenian sage; for it "scatters that darkness which covers our souls, and tells us how to distinguish good from evil." The valley of the Nile has now uncovered its hieroglyphics to confirm and illustrate its claims; and Nineveh, out of the wreck and rubbish of three thousand years, has at length yielded up its ruins to praise and glorify the Hebrew oracles. — *Conflict with Modern Philosophy.*

See pages 93, 112, 131.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE PSALMS.

We now reach what must without hesitation be pronounced the most *spiritual* portion of the Old Testament — that which more entirely than any other single portion is occupied in the hopes, fears, and conflicts of man's spirit in its intercourse with God.

What would the Bible be, without the book of Psalms? It seems, at the first view, a very separate portion—a part that might be taken out without destroying the symmetry of the whole. But it is not so. Should the experiment be made, it would be seen that a man with his arm ~~shorn~~ off at the shoulder-blade is less maimed and disfigured than would be a Bible, deficient of this book of groans, and tears, and triumphant shouts. In fact, a Bible without a book of Psalms, is simply an inconceivable thing. It is not only part of our rich heritage, but of ourselves. It is our voice; it is the voice in which the church, in all its members, in all its sects, countries, and climes, has for three thousand years poured forth her soul before God.

We may say of the Psalms with safety, that it is the most entirely religious book in the Old Testament. There may indeed be other books—as the Pentateuch and the Prophets—that furnish more materials for positive views of religion, for theologi-

cal doctrine, and for right principles of worship. But the Book of Psalms is the great source and foundation of religious experience, of religion as manifesting its true life and character in the soul of man. What an exhaustless variety of religious thought and feeling pervades this precious book!

Luther, in his preface to the Psalter, asks, "Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy, than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the holy, as into a beautiful garden—as into heaven itself. What delicate, fragrant, and lovely flowers are there springing up in all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts, towards God and his goodness! On the other hand, where do you find more profound, mournful expressions of sorrow, than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look into the heart of all the holy, but as into death, nay, as into the very pit of despair. How dark and gloomy is everything there, arising from all manner of melancholy

apprehensions of God's displeasure! I hold that there has never appeared on earth, and there never can appear, a more precious book of examples and legends of saints, than the Psalter is. For here we find out, not merely what one or two holy men have done, but what the Head himself of all the holy has done, and what all the holy do still; how they stand affected towards God, towards friends and enemies; how they behave in all dangers, and sustain themselves in all sufferings. Besides, all manner of Divine and salutary instructions and commands are contained therein. Hence, too, it comes, that the Psalter forms, as it were, a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone, so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are."

Calvin, in his preface to his Commentary

on the Psalms, declares: "I have been accustomed to call this book, not inappropriately, an anatomy of all the parts of the soul; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious, that is not there represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions by which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. The other parts of Scripture contain the commandments which God enjoined his servants to announce to us. But here the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God, and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, call, or rather draw, each of us to the examination of himself in particular, in order that none of the many infirmities to which we are subject, and of the many vices with which we abound, may remain concealed. It is by perusing these inspired compositions, that men will be effectually awakened to a sense of their maladies, and at the

same time instructed in seeking remedies for their cure. In a word, whatever may serve to encourage us when we are about to pray to God, is taught us in this Book."

Hooker says: "All good necessary to be known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present, comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."

Bishop Horne, in the preface to his well known Commentary on the Psalms, designates it, "An epitome on the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. Like the paradise of Eden, this little book affords us in perfection, though in miniature, every thing that groweth elsewhere; 'every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food,' and above all, what was there lost but is here restored, 'the tree of life, in the midst of the garden.' That which we read, as matters of speculation, in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice when we

recite it in the Psalms; in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these they are acted; by a perusal of the former we learn how others served God, but by using the latter we serve him ourselves.”
— *John Kitto, D.D.*



